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PlayStation
MAGAZINE

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Need for Speed

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 93 (June 2005)

EA GOES IN HOT PURSUIT OF ITS RACING ROOTS

JUNE 2005 ISSUE 93
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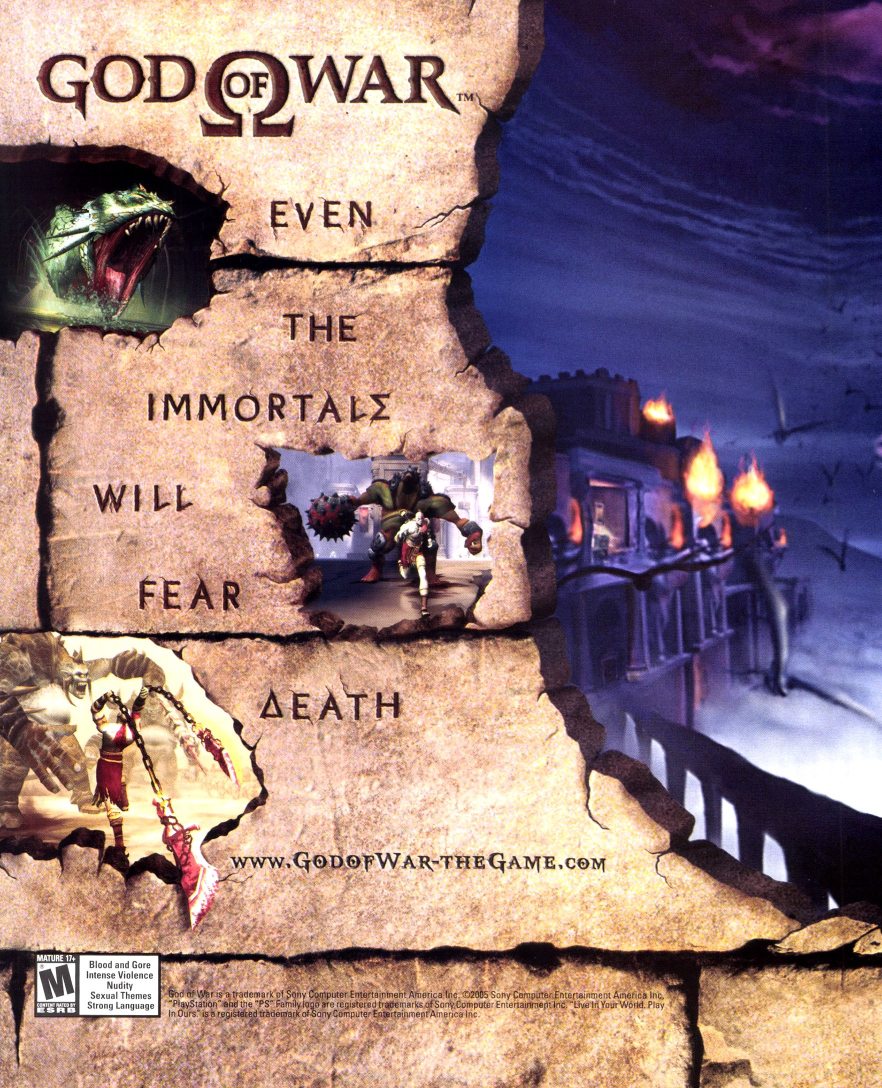
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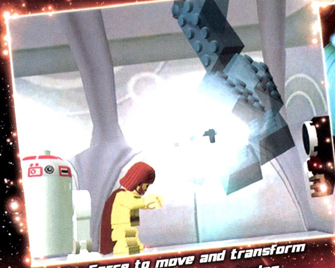

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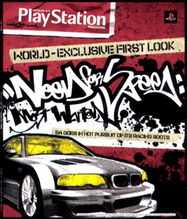
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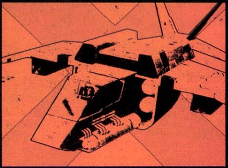

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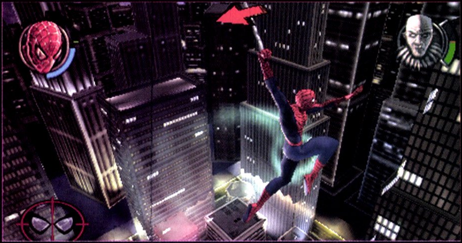
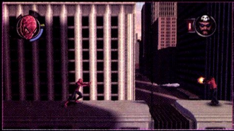




CAMERA
LOCK

SPIDER-MAN 2

SOMEBODY CALL FOR A PORTABLE WEBSLINGER?

While Spidey's swinging days date back to the Atari, it was the recent PS2 version of *Spider-Man 2* that really captured the feeling of being an agile webslinger sorting out thugs and thwipping your way through the city. However, if you're looking for that free-roaming Spidey experience on your PSP, well, you'll have to wait. *Spider-Man 2* for the PSP is more like the earlier titles.

Which isn't a bad thing, because those earlier titles are all pretty decent (if a bit too straightforward) action games that give a fair representation of Spidey's coolness. *Spider-Man 2* for PSP maintains that consistency and offers the bonus of looking really good on the handheld system.

So while you can't websling freely around New York, you get a decent amount of variety in the game's 19 missions. While there's a whole lot of "run in and smack baddies," there's also a fair share of objectives like "save people," "defuse the bombs," and "web-up things before they fall." The boss battles are nicely done, with particular kudos to a fight in which you have to use Rhino as a weapon against Shocker. Unfortunately, despite how varied these missions are, they're also way short. You can finish each one in about 10 minutes—meaning the whole game takes around four hours. Yikes.

Also aggravating are the camera and the PSP's button layout. Camera changes are done on the D-pad and movement is on the analog nub, meaning you have to move your thumb to adjust the camera, which is pretty hard in the middle of combat. The camera itself is most annoying when tracking down airborne enemies, so the obligatory fight with the Vulture is easily the most annoying one.

Spider-Man 2 is one of the inevitable decent-but-nonawesome games that falls into any launch window. It's a thoroughly solid, if short, spin on the franchise, and it's worth at least a rental. Or it can get you by until a Spidey game that incorporates free-roaming webslinging is done on the PSP. « *Thierry Nguyen*

PETER PARKER Looks great, nice mission variety, cool boss battles

BEN REILLY Crap camera, controls don't quite match the PSP layout, short

Pub. Activision **Dev.** Activision **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●◐○]

Shocker must have an awesome agent, as he's been a boss in every *Spider-Man* game since *Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro* for the PS1.

DARKSTALKERS CHRONICLE: CHAOS TOWER

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN, SORT OF

***Darkstalkers* is an odd** choice for the PSP, considering the extensive number of better fighting games in Capcom's library, but this edition has its own unique charm, or at least it will for fans of the series. Much like the *Street Fighter Anniversary Collection*, *Darkstalkers Chronicle* lets you pit different versions of the *Darkstalkers* characters against each other. So you can have Dimitri from the original game fight Sasquatch from *Night Warriors*, the second game in the series. It's also worth noting that the differences between the characters in each game are pretty minimal, so you won't really have any excessively unbalanced matches in either the arcade or multiplayer modes.

AUTO
B.B.Hood
Hsien-Ko
Rikuo

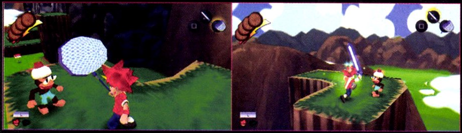
And while it's pretty awesome to engage in wireless multiplayer matches, the best mode is chaos tower. This mode offers the most variety and most incentive to keep playing the game because it not only features different match types with various stipulations (no punches or no special moves—things of that nature), but also lets you unlock items like art from each of the games. The arcade mode really doesn't offer enough to keep you interested for any prolonged period of time, but chaos tower does a good job of keeping you glued to your PSP as you climb the tower. Although *Darkstalkers* doesn't really possess a level of depth that hardcore fighting fans can appreciate, there's still an inherent layer of novelty in playing an arcade-quality fighting game on the go, even if it's not one of the best. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Pretty much a perfect arcade port, chaos tower mode adds variety

CONS Not very deep, really old-school fighting mechanics

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** T **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●○○]



APE ESCAPE: ON THE LOOSE

RUN, MONKEYS, RUN

You may be among the adult human beings who still get a chuckle out of the concept of chasing and catching monkeys wearing flashing lights on their heads, but I have to think that even the party-game aspect of the *Ape Escape* titles is of much greater appeal to the 12-and-under set, the vast majority of whom will never own PSPs (thanks to the price of entry) unless their parents have lost their minds.

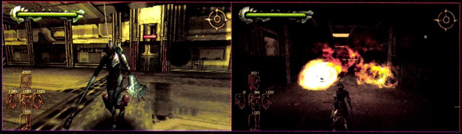
On the Loose's best characteristic is that its simple platformer gameplay goals—chase monkeys, catch monkeys, collect coins, avoid various environmental pitfalls—are perfect for handheld gaming. There's naturally not a lot of depth (it's an *Ape Escape* game, after all), but that kind of clear cause-and-effect play often makes for a morning commute that seems to last mere minutes. Unfortunately, what the PSP can't offer is the two-analog-stick control scheme that has defined the *Ape Escape* games. Here, you use the nub to control your character's movement and the Square, Triangle, and Circle buttons to control attacks, effectively quashing your ability to attack in all directions with the right analog stick, as you can in the original *Ape Escape*. And since the camera is controlled by the directional buttons, it tends to lag, which makes chasing those quick little monkeys a pain in the tuckus.

I eked a few enjoyable play sessions out of *On the Loose*, but the camera-control difficulties prompted me to ditch it for *Lumines*, which offers the same simple appeal but is infinitely more satisfying. « *Kristen Salvatore*

PROS Easy on the eyes, easy on the mind
CONS Not especially challenging (or interesting), lacks the fun of the two-stick control scheme

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** SCEA **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●●●○○



RENGOKU: THE TOWER OF PURGATORY

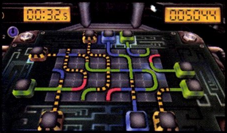
TEN THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU

1 The inadequate tutorial is a stand-alone film that plays at the beginning of the game, so by the time you get to the game, you don't remember the commands.
2 The interface is awkward and ugly.
3 The protagonist is decidedly uncool. If I'm playing as a robot, I want to be a metalloid, muscular, ass-kicking robot. In this game, I look and run like C-3PO. And when I equip weapons on my head—say a claw or a sword—I look stupid.
4 The environments are repetitious and boring. You know it's bad when there are two doors on a level and you can't remember which one you came in and which one you need to exit through because you've been spacing out since the room looks the same as the last five did.
5 Non-ammo-dependent weapons lose power and need to be recharged in a control room. They lose their power even if I just happen to swing them through the air.
6 Enemies, who all look the same because they're so freaking small, pop up in rooms I've already cleared.
7 Power-ups in crates are good only if I need them right then—I can't store them for later use.
8 Death results in me being booted back a level and stripped of all my equipped weapons.
9 Loading saves after I die involves quitting all the way out of the game and then restarting.
10 The game's design could not have been done with the PSP in mind—instead it plays like a poor PS2 game that was ported over with no adjustments for portability or a smaller screen. No other game in the PSP launch window is so miserably underachieving. « *Dana Jongewaard*

VERDICT This is the last PSP game you should be buying.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Never-Land Company **ESRB** M **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●○○○○



SMART BOMB

DUMB PURCHASE

There are some games that are tough. There are games that are a little rough around the edges. And then there are the games that make me fantasize about reaching through the screen, yanking out a developer, and—at my expense!—wiping that smug grin right off his face.

We were already on thin ice when someone at Core Design decided that the best way to liven up its puzzle game was to include laughably inappropriate cinemas about bomb disposal and paramilitary organizations—think *Lumines* with cutscenes from *Metal Gear Solid 3*. But silly as this may be, it isn't a deal breaker. The real problems, of course, come when you get to the game itself. *Smart Bomb* offers a menu of puzzles. Some are logic problems. For example, you'll rotate sections of wire to light lamps. Others are more action based, such as reflecting lasers back at a cannon with a moving mirror.

The problem? The game hates you. *Smart Bomb* may be the first game in which you can die on the menu screen, simply for not choosing an option fast enough. Controls are sluggish—moving around the bits and bobs is an annoying exercise in slow-paced sloppiness. Worse, there's a counter furiously ticking down. As it decreases, the screen starts violently shaking, adding to the "fun." Failure means starting the level (and working through the puzzles) all over again. Oh, yeah—the computer screws up bits that you've already solved while you play. It seems to me that Core designed this game specifically to cause an influx of broken PSPs to arrive at Sony's customer service center after frustrated gamers hurl them to the ground in disgust.

The worst part might be the fact that there are clever ideas here. The puzzles alone would be enough, guys. My advice to the developers is next time, skip the shaking, the timers, and the laughable cinemas and spend more time polishing and testing. Then maybe your bomb would be worth buying. « *Christian Nutt*

VERDICT A competent, if unimaginative, puzzler that is positively hamstrung by a perverse (and utterly pervasive) desire to see the player fail.

Pub. Eidos **Dev.** Core Design **ESRB** E10+ **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●◐○○○

DID YOU KNOW...

As hard as it may be to believe after playing *Smart Bomb*, real bomb disposal experts do not, in fact, rotate tiles and solve labyrinths to defuse explosive devices.

SECOND OPINION

"I played it for 10 minutes and wanted to kill myself." —*EGM*'s Brian Intihar

THE AVIATOR

(Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett)

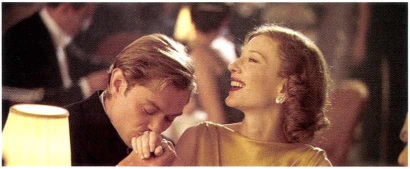
THE WIND BENEATH HIS WINGS by John Scalzi

***The Aviator* is the story** of a man doomed by his own demons, and that man is not Howard Hughes, whom this film portrays in his young and dashing days, not in his "creepy billionaire old guy who keeps his urine in jars" days. No, the man is Martin Scorsese, who directed this movie. After the relative disappointment of *Gangs of New York*, which was deemed too violent and icky for a Best Picture (or Best Director) Oscar win, Scorsese built this cunning cinematic contraption, which was designed to trap Oscars like a no-pest strip catches flies. It was clear skies until Clint Eastwood swooped in out of nowhere with *Million Dollar Baby*.

If Scorsese cannot win an Oscar with *The Aviator*, he may never win one at all. It is unfailing Oscar bait: It's a middlebrow biopic of a mid-20th-century notable with psychological issues that's lavishly produced, and its charismatic star (DiCaprio getting his "now you are a man" Oscar nomination) is ably assisted by a series of Oscar-noticed wingmen and women like Alan Alda (nominated, didn't win) and Cate Blanchett as Kate Hepburn (who did win). And it doesn't stink—not the director's best, but perfectly acceptable. It could have won. It should have won, especially since Eastwood already had Best Director and Best Picture Oscars.

And yet, here we are in May, with Scorsese still Oscar-less. I don't know if the Oscars really are an obsessive object of desire for him, but if they are, perhaps this film will convince him that you can't triangulate your way into the Academy's graces. Maybe now Scorsese will just get it out of his system and simply make great movies without worrying if they are Oscar bait. One can hope.

RATING ●●●●○



ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

(Ethan Hawke, Laurence Fishburne)

Ethan's a good cop. Larry's a bad man. They fight crime! Or, more accurately, they fight the nasty cops who have surrounded the precinct house in which Ethan's a cop and Larry's a prisoner, looking to kill them and everyone else in the building because, well, that's what the movie says they should do. It's moderately fun to watch Ethan and Larry join forces and shoot people in this remake of a 1976 John Carpenter film, but keep your expectations at that level, won't you?

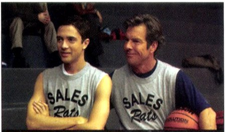
RATING ●●●○○

NATIONAL TREASURE

(Nicolas Cage, Sean Bean)

National Treasure is not only a mediocre action film, it's also a cinematic experiment—producer Jerry Bruckheimer, long known for loud, stupid R-rated action flicks, was asked to bring his certain brand of loud, stupid magic to the PG-rated realm on the idea that today's families are interested in loud, stupid films they can see together. So here is *National Treasure*, essentially a knockoff of *The Da Vinci Code* with America's founding fathers standing in for Leo, all done in bloodless PG. And it was a big hit: $170 million domestically. So we can expect to see more loud, stupid PG-rated action films in the future. Yes, it's competently made, and yes, I guess you could watch it with the whole family. But if this is your idea of family time, consider *Parcheesi*.

RATING ●●○○○



IN GOOD COMPANY

(Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace)

Dennis Quaid thinks he's a corporate hotshot until he's replaced by a real corporate hotshot who is half his age (Topher Grace) and who is dating his daughter to boot. But then this corporate satire swerves and becomes something with an actual human heart. It's also another left turn from director Paul Weitz, showing that there is indeed more to him than *American Pie*—and in deference to that, this will (probably) be the last time I refer to that flick in reference to Weitz. Way to move on, Weitz!

RATING ●●●●○

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

(Jeremy Irons, Al Pacino)

Al Pacino dives into one of the most problematic Shakespearean roles to modern audiences: Shylock the moneylender. He's problematic because he's a Jew, and no matter how you slice this play, it stinks of anti-Semitism. This version puts the anti-Semitism in context, but otherwise it lets the viewer deal with the political implications and gets to the acting. Pacino doesn't chew scenery as much as you'd expect; he hits the right notes for a complicated character in a complicated play.

RATING ●●●●○

DVD RELEASES

May 3
National Treasure

May 10
Alone in the Dark
Assault on Precinct 13
In Good Company
The Life Aquatic
The Merchant of Venice

May 17
Kinsey
Six Feet Under: Season 3
Son of the Mask
Team America: World Police
White Noise

May 24
The Aviator
Samurai Jack: Season 2

SON OF THE MASK

(Jamie Kennedy, Alan Cumming)

If someone came into my office and said, "I have a great idea! Let's make a sequel to a 10-year-old Jim Carrey film, only without Jim Carrey, and let's spend $80 million doing it!" you know what I would do? First, I would lock my office door. Then I would turn up my stereo. Then I would take the ax I keep for just this purpose, and I would hack that person into tiny pieces, and I would feed his remains to the tank of piranhas I also keep for just this purpose. No jury would convict me.

RATING ●○○○○

KINSEY

(Liam Neeson, Laura Linney)

The smartest movie about sex you'll ever see—or the sexiest movie about academic research. Neeson plays Alfred Kinsey, the researcher who hauled sex out of the gutter and took it seriously as research so that today when people hyperventilate about sex, at least they can do it from an informed perspective. Kinsey was a strange fellow, although probably not how you'd expect, and this film intelligently captures that, as well as the implications of his research on the people he knew.

RATING ●●●●○

THE LIFE AQUATIC

(Bill Murray, Owen Wilson)

No one's happier than I that Bill Murray is being taken seriously as an actor, and he's great here as the sort of underwater explorer you'd get if you crossed Jacques Cousteau with a pound of really potent weed. The problem is that director Wes Anderson comes off as having partaken of an economy-sized barrel of kind bud as well, so what you end up with is sort of like *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* on a tropical beach. Sure, it sounds good, but for me it was a little more forced whimsy than I could take.

RATING ●●●○○

UMD RELEASES

April 19
Hellboy
The House of Flying Daggers
Kill Bill: Vol. 1
Once Upon a Time in Mexico
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl
Resident Evil 2: Apocalypse
XXX

May 3
Hero
National Treasure
Reign of Fire

WHITE NOISE

(Michael Keaton, Deborah Kara Unger)

Michael Keaton hears dead people! Or maybe that's just his agent on a cell phone as he enters a tunnel, apologizing to Keaton for not getting him better work. This is a goofy little tale that plays up "electronic voice phenomenon," in which dead people supposedly communicate through random static. Keaton does what he can to make it seem like he's caught up in all this, but he's an actor, not a miracle worker, and this film needs a miracle other than static-filled voices from the grave.

RATING ●●○○○

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REPLAY

106>

GT4

TUNING LOGIC

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Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides *OPM* with top-of-the-line strategies every month.

In this issue, Prima's strategy gurus share their expertise on how best to tune up your car in *Gran Turismo 4*. Trust us, these guys know their stuff.

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The only gaming comic you'll ever need

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GT4: TUNING LOGIC

YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR PERFECTING YOUR RIDE

INTAKE & EXHAUST

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Dollar for dollar, there's no better upgrade. Along with the racing chip, this is one of the first upgrades you should make. You'll notice increased low-end torque and slightly higher top speeds with even the basic kit. But as you upgrade to the higher tiers, the gains get smaller and smaller; it costs more to make smaller increases beyond a certain level.

SEMI-RACING INTAKE & EXHAUST

Cost: 2,900 Cr.

This kit revs a little higher, adding 7% to 10% in horsepower to your base value. For an extra 1,900 Cr., you can have the full racing kit.

SPORTS INTAKE & EXHAUST

Cost: 1,600 Cr.

One of the best, if not the best, bargains in the game. You should expect to see a 3% to 5% gain in overall horsepower. This is a very good buy.

RACING INTAKE & EXHAUST

Cost: 4,800 Cr.

A full race exhaust and intake usually adds 10% to 15% to your base HP level. Not a bad gain for 4,800 Cr. WIth this kit installed, you'll definitely notice the gains on the track.

BRAKES

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Brake upgrades are often overlooked, but they make a noticeable difference on the track. For those of you who drive with a realistic approach (i.e. get hard on the brakes), the racing brakes are a "must-buy" for 4,700 Cr. The brake controller is ideal for controlling spinouts, but for 10,600 Cr. you can spend your money elsewhere and get better results. Don't mess with the brake controller until you get a car that's worth keeping.

RACING BRAKES

Cost: 4,700 Cr.

When tested from 100 mph, we noticed a reduction in our overall stopping distances by 15% to 20%. This upgrade is a no-brainer. Spend the 4,700 Cr. and be done with it.

BRAKE CONTROLLER

Cost: 10,600 Cr.

This controls the brake balance and is essential when balancing a car.

Low Value Overall

This decreases your braking power but increases stability.

High Value Overall

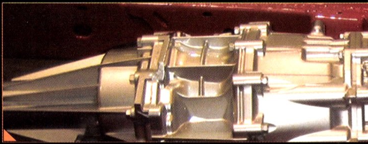
This increases your braking power but decreases stability.

Low Front Value, High Rear Value

This increases oversteer during braking.

High Front Value, Low Rear Value

This increases understeer during braking.



DRIVETRAIN

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Swapping transmissions can be a double-edged sword if you're not sure what you're dealing with. Slapping a full racing transmission on your otherwise "stock" car isn't the best thing to do, unless you know how to go in and tune. Purchasing a variable transmission also lets you tune your final drive ratio, which when done correctly, makes all the difference on the track. The adjustable LSDs work well for fine-tuning but are sort of expensive for the relatively small gains you'll notice on the track.

CLOSE GEARING

Cost: 5,600 Cr.

A solid upgrade for the price. You'll notice increased acceleration and an increased overall top speed.

SUPERCLOSE GEARING

Cost: 5,700 Cr.

Remember that higher gear ratios (overall) equal more wheelspin per engine revolution.

VARIABLE GEARING

Cost: 10,200 Cr.

Keep your ratios close and this transmission is a tuner's best friend.

LARGE SINGLE CLUTCH

Cost: 1,600 Cr.

Make this upgrade only after you start doing upgrades to your engine.

TWIN CLUTCH

Cost: 2,600 Cr.

As you do more mods to your engine, you'll need a better clutch. This one is good for mid-horsepower levels.

TRIPLE CLUTCH

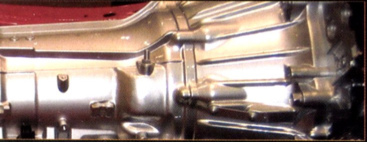
Cost: 4,600 Cr.

The strongest of all clutches, this model is for extreme turbo or NA applications where very high HP is on tap.

SPORTS FLYWHEEL

Cost: 430 Cr.

Lets you gain RPMs by reducing the rotating mass of the unit itself. Excellent purchase.



SEMI-RACING FLYWHEEL

Cost: 550 Cr.
Lighter than the sports model and offers even less rotating mass. Works better with more horsepower.

RACING FLYWHEEL

Cost: 1,000 Cr.
The lightest and strongest of all flywheels, this model is for hardcore race cars only.

1-WAY LSD

Cost: 4,250 Cr.
The 1-way LSD adjusts acceleration slippage. A nice upgrade, but expensive.

1.5-WAY LSD

Cost: 4,250 Cr.
The 1.5-way adjusts acceleration slippage and also a bit of deceleration slippage. It's a hybrid.

2-WAY LSD

Cost: 4,250 Cr.
This LSD controls both acceleration and full deceleration slippage. A full 2-way unit.

VARIABLE LSD

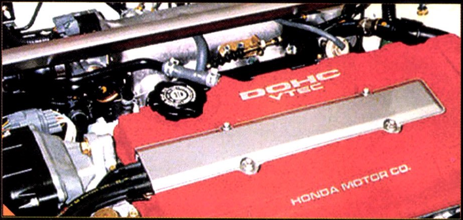
Cost: 6,300 Cr.
The ultimate in adjustable rear ends, the variable model is the best overall value in the LSD market.

AYC LSD

Cost: 6,300 Cr.
This is primarily for rally cars and offers a little bit more control over your differential slippage.

CARBON DRIVESHAFT

Cost: 2,750 Cr.
You won't notice much difference on the track with this upgrade. We sure didn't.



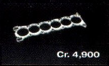
ENGINE

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

There is no doubt that the engine is the most expensive part of your car to upgrade. With those Benjamins, though, expect big results—especially at the lower levels. When you've got nowhere else to turn (especially for naturally aspirated engines—except maybe a supercharger), this is the only place to squeeze that real power out of your car. Nitrous is a new feature for the *Gran Turismo* series, and its been implemented at a price that makes it affordable for everyone.

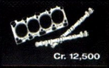
NA STAGE 1

Cost: 4,900 Cr.
This usually adds at least 35 and sometimes, up to 50 additional HP to your engine's base output level. An excellent buy for 4,900 Cr.!



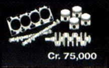
NA STAGE 2

Cost: 12,500 Cr.
More than twice the price of a stage 1, but it gives 15% to 20% more power. You can skip stage 1 and go straight for stage 2 if you desire.



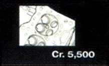
NA STAGE 3

Cost: 75,000 Cr.
This is like the stage 4 turbo kit for NA cars. It's also ridiculously expensive, but you'll get incredible gains for the price.



PORT AND POLISH

Cost: 5,500 Cr.
Porting and polishing your cylinder heads creates decent HP gains. Because of the high cost, though, leave it for cars you plan on keeping.



ENGINE BALANCING

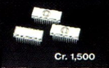
Cost: 12,000 Cr.
This is the most cost ineffective way to make horsepower. Only add this to a car after you've done every other mod in the book.

DISPLACEMENT UP

Cost: 8,500 Cr.
This option is not available to cars with cylinder walls bored out to the max—i.e., the vast majority. For others, it's a decent upgrade.

RACING CHIP

Cost: 1,500 Cr.
An extremely valuable upgrade that adjusts your engine's spark and timing curves, raising your shift points and increasing horsepower.



NITROUS

Cost: 5,000 Cr.
If you plan on doing a lot of drag racing, this is the fastest and most cost-effective way to shave serious time off your quarter-mile runs.

WHAT IS: N_2O

Nitrous oxide (N_2O)—or just "nitrous" as it's referred to in *GT4*—is used to increase horsepower levels at the push of a button. Nitrous oxide works its magic when it's heated to 570 F (at this point it splits into oxygen and nitrogen. When it does so, it allows more oxygen into the engine and in turn, lets it burn more fuel. As it's being injected into the combustion chambers of an engine, it vaporizes and provides a significant secondary effect on performance: It cools the intake air. When you reduce the intake air temperature—as seen in the various cold-air intakes available on the market—you increase the intake's air density charge, making even more oxygen available inside the cylinder walls and allowing even more fuel to be delivered safely. In *GT4*, you can purchase nitrous oxide, as well as control the amount injected. The "shot" is actually the size of the hit your motor gets, which is determined by jet size. The shot, along with how long the button is depressed, will determine the actual performance increase you'll see in your car.

TURBO

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Purchase the turbo that matches the overall power level of your car, or you'll be left with gobs of turbo lag and unwanted side effects. An intercooler resembles a radiator, housing large passages for the intake flow using either outside air or water to lower the temperature of the intake flow inside. In other words, it adds horsepower for a relatively low cost. The bottom line is that if you've got a turbocharged car, this is the place to go for massive HP gains. Don't make the mistake of saving for a stage 4 turbo kit, slapping it on, and thinking you're done. The rest of the car needs to be upgraded in conjunction with the turbo or you won't see the proper performance adjustments on the track.

STAGE 1 TURBO KIT

Cost: 4,800 Cr.

The stage 1 turbo kit usually offers about a 10% increase in overall HP. Most of it is available at low RPMs, but you'll notice it throughout the powerband.

STAGE 2 TURBO KIT

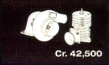
Cost: 13,500 Cr.

The stage 2 turbo kit usually offers about a 20% increase in overall HP, most of which is available at low-mid RPMs.

NA STAGE 3 TURBO KIT

Cost: 42,500 Cr.

The stage 3 turbo kit usually offers about a 35% increase in HP, most of which is available at mid-high RPMs. Make sure your car is set up to handle the power this turbo adds.



NA STAGE 4 TURBO KIT

Cost: 80,000 Cr.

The stage 4 turbo kit offers a 125% increase in overall HP, most of which is available at high RPMs only. This turbo is for select high-revving applications only.

SPORTS INTERCOOLER

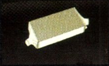
Cost: 1,800 Cr.

A very nice increase for the money, and as long as your car is turbocharged, this should be one of the first upgrades you make.

LARGE RACING INTERCOOLER

Cost: 3,000 Cr.

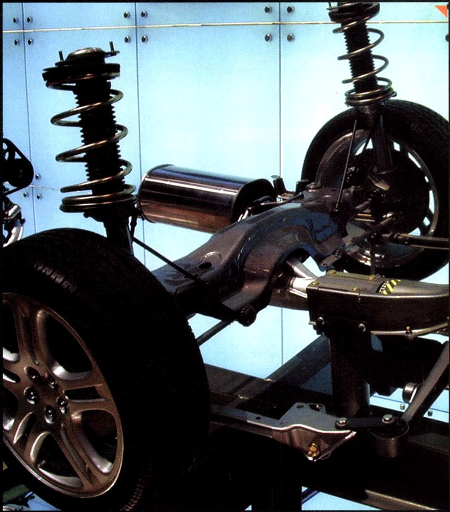
A larger and even more efficient version of the standard sports intercooler, this model is for higher horsepower applications.



SUPERCHARGER

Cost: 13,500 Cr.

Supercharging is a new feature to the *Gran Turismo* series and is well worth the 13,500 Cr. price tag. For NA cars that can't go the turbo route, this is your only viable option for forced induction. Supercharging works by forcing air into the intake by a crank-controlled turbine. It adds serious horsepower and increases throttle response.



SUSPENSION

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Suspension parts are where serious cornering improvements are made. Everything "handling" related is controlled and adjusted here, so be prepared to spend some serious time on the test tracks checking your results once you start tweaking. For the money, the best bet is to save for the fully customizable suspension and go from there.

SPORTS SUSPENSION

Cost: 3,200 Cr.

This is a solid upgrade that provides increased dampening and overall tighter response in and out of corners.

SEMI-RACING SUSPENSION

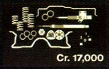
Cost: 7,400 Cr.

Slightly better than the sports model, but with a significantly higher cost. We usually skip this model and go for the fully customizable setup.

FULLY CUSTOMIZABLE SUSPENSION

Cost: 17,000 Cr.

The ultimate in adjustable suspensions, this kit lets you control every aspect of your front and rear suspension settings.



DAMPER SETTING TIPS

Damper bound is the act of the shock absorber going up, and damper rebound is this assembly coming back down.

Low Rear Rebound, High Front Bound

Makes your car very loose into turns.

Low Front Rebound, High Rear Bound

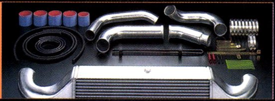
Makes your car very loose out of turns.

High Rear Rebound, Low Front Bound

Makes your car very tight into turns.

High Front Rebound, Low Rear Bound

Makes your car very tight out of turns.



GOT BOOST

TURBOCHARGING 101

Turbocharging is a type of forced induction that works by compressing the air flowing into the engine. Much like the end result of nitrous, compressing this air lets the engine squeeze more air into a cylinder, which obviously, allows more fuel be added to the mix. Adding more fuel equals more power.

Turbos are rated by the amount of "boost" they create, which is usually measured in psi. In order to achieve this boost, the turbos use exhaust output from the engine to spin a small turbine (which can spin at speeds in excess of 100,000 RPM), which in turn spins an air pump. The actual amount of air that's pumped back into the intake is determined by the wastegate. The wastegate is a valve that can sense the amount of boost being created, thereby controlling what goes in and what goes out.

An intercooler is much like a radiator for your car, except it's designed specifically to cool the intake charge that the turbo pushes out. Remember, the air being pumped out of a turbo is HOT—and hot is bad. Before going straight back into the engine, it's routed through a series of cooling fins and then pumped back into the intake. Intercoolers are an efficient and cost-effective way to bring serious HP levels to a turbocharged car.

TOE IN & TOE OUT TIPS

Keep these settings pretty close to stock unless your car is extremely loose or tight going in and out of turns. Too much variance from stock induces spinouts.

CAMBER TIPS

Camber is responsible for controlling the traction of the front and rear wheels. This is a very easy setting to control, although each car has a completely different "perfect" setup.

Low Value Overall

This is a good way to get more speed on the straights, but you will be a little slower through the turns because of loss of traction.

High Value Overall

You'll get great traction in corners, but your speed down the straights will suffer.

SPRING RATE TIPS

The most important of all suspension settings are your spring rates. The real trick is finding that perfect setting for your particular car, which this set of tips should help you find. One thing to remember is that your car needs to be well balanced in both stiffness and body roll. This is usually best accomplished without a huge variance from front to rear settings.

Low Value Overall

In general, this makes your car ride more consistently and perform with predictability. It's less responsive and tends to have more body roll, but it's much better for elevation changes (bumps and jumps).

High Value Overall

A high setting brings a more responsive feel when you go into turns, because it has much less body roll from side to side. If you set this value too high, however, your car will become very unstable and spinning out will be much more likely.

STABILIZER BAR TIPS

Low Value Overall

A low setting brings more body roll and greatly decreased liveliness through the turns. However, you'll be much more stable through rough spots of the course.

High Value Overall

This produces a little less body roll and greatly increased liveliness through the turns. You'll easily lose control over bumps and jumps if it's too high, though.

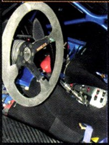
TIRES

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The racing/qualifying tires are best if you're looking to turn out amazing lap times or if you're going for all-out grip. For endurance events, though, a harder tire works better since you won't need to change them so often. Dirt and snow tires are for rally events and shouldn't be used on normal sports cars.

STANDARD/ECONOMY	Cost: 0 Cr.
STANDARD/LUXURY	Cost: 0 Cr
STANDARD/ROAD	Cost: 0 Cr
SPORTS/HARD	Cost: 5,100 Cr.
SPORTS/MEDIUM	Cost: 6,000 Cr.
SPORTS/SOFT	Cost: 6,800 Cr.
RACING/SUPERHARD	Cost: 8,400 Cr.
RACING/HARD	Cost: 10,500 Cr.
RACING/MEDIUM	Cost: 22,500 Cr.
RACING/SOFT	Cost: 35,000 Cr.
RACING/QUALIFYING	Cost: 47,500 Cr.
DIRT TIRES	Cost: 22,500 Cr.
SNOW TIRES	Cost: 22,500 Cr.

OTHER



PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

For the money, this section offers a lot. Weight reduction makes cars handle tighter, brake faster, and accelerate with more response. There aren't many upgrades that do all three of those things in one shot. The rigidity upgrades are great for endurance events because they keep body roll to a minimum.

VCD CONTROLLER

Cost: 10,500 Cr.

For 4WD cars only, this lets you control the amount of torque that goes to the front and rear differentials. Very helpful for 4WD cars.

WEIGHT REDUCTION STAGE 1

Cost: 1,200 Cr.

This stage removes unwanted parts to make the car lighter. A lighter car handles, accelerates, and brakes better.

WEIGHT REDUCTION STAGE 2

Cost: 5,500 Cr.

At stage 2, parts are replaced with lighter materials to make an even larger difference on the track. Worth every penny.

INCREASE RIGIDITY

Cost: 30,000 Cr.

Adding a roll cage and tower bars raises the overall rigidity of the entire car. Very expensive, but worth it for your highest-end supercars.

WEIGHT REDUCTION STAGE 3

Cost: 22,000 Cr.

Expensive, and the results aren't quite as dramatic as stages 1 or 2. For your hardcore race cars, though, this is a "must have" upgrade.

RIGIDITY REFRESH

Cost: 50,000 Cr.

A car's body takes wear and tear as you drive it, but this upgrade keeps everything fresh. Expensive, but crucial for high-end race cars.

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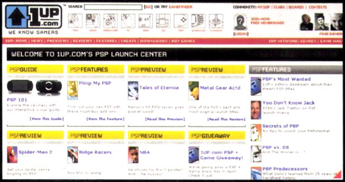
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PSP Predecessors

1UP.COM
Sad that you can't go to E3? Well dry your eyes, because you can find out all the latest excitement from the show floor right here at 1UP.

OPM.1UP.COM
Think the *OPM* editors are the best reviewers ever? Think they have the worst taste in the world? Whatever you think of them, you can go here to directly comment on everything that they write.

PSP.1UP.COM
This fancy-pants little portable gadget can do a whole lot more than just play games. To find out all of the creative ways in which people are using it, stop by the dedicated PSP page.

PS2.1UP.COM
Don't trust that e-mail in your in-box with "HAWT GAMING NEWZ READ ME NOW" to be accurate? Then trust this page instead.

BOARDS.1UP.COM
It's like having all your friends in a little electronic box where you can share all your tales of how your cat loves to play *God of War* at absolutely any time of the night or day. You're a lucky son of a gun.

CLUBS.1UP.COM
There are clubs on our site about absolutely everything. There are even clubs about clubs. Surely you can come up with a more original idea for a club than half of these people have—go on, we challenge you.

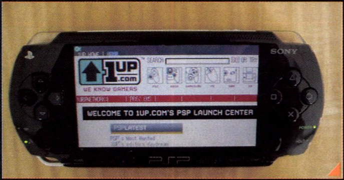
FEATURED CLUB
NFS-MW-CLUB.1UP.COM
From the description: "Yes, people, there's a new *NFS* in town, and here is the club to discuss it!"

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

TIME TO CUT THE CORD

After spending some quality time with the PSP, we have found wires to be increasingly more annoying. While you can't get rid of all of them (we still love you, Mr. Edison), some can be banished for good.

D-Link
DGL-4300
Power
Wireless
System



PS2 WIRELESS ONLINE

GET RID OF THOSE BROADBAND CABLES

The combo of a wireless router and a wireless access point can rid you of most broadband wires, and the technology has been around long enough that many systems are idiotproof to set up. (We sent our least tech-savvy editor home with one, and the operation was successful.) This system is a full-on solution for wireless access—with it, you can take multiple Wi-Fi–enabled devices (desktops, laptops, PSPs) online at the same time.

To make your PS2 Wi-Fi receptive, you'll need a wireless access point, which plugs into your PS2 Network Adaptor with a standard Ethernet cable. Not every adapter on the market will work with your PS2—you need to be sure that you choose one that can connect with an Ethernet cable rather than a USB cable (many offer both options). We played with the D-Link Wireless Gaming Adapter, which lists for $120 but can be found in the $100 range.

For the router, we experimented with the D-Link DGL-4300. The advantage of this system for gamers is that it's programmed to automatically streamline gaming traffic and prioritize it over other types of files; if you're fighting for bandwidth with other users in the house, it's a nice option. However, at $160, it costs more than other wireless routers (which run around $100), so if your primary concern is just getting rid of the wires, you may want to shop for cheaper options. Keep in mind that buying an 802.11b router (the DGL-4300 uses 802.11g technology) will result in a significantly slower connection—but also a significantly lower price.

Setup is simple. Just insert the router between your wire-anchored computer and the broadband connection, and the router will automatically pick up Wi-Fi–enabled devices. Then, using the configuration discs from the adapter and router, go ahead and set up your network. There are wizards for those who are non–tech savvy, and the advanced setup is still comprehensible to those who are intimidated by their office's IT person.

If a full-fledged network is too taxing on your wallet, you can still connect just your PS2 wirelessly with Nyko's Wireless Net Extender. Simply plug one end into your Internet connection, then plug the receiver into your PS2 Network Adaptor, and you're instantly online—no software configurations required. We found the Wireless Net Extender priced as low as $60 online, so shop around. «

PORTABLE INTERNET

HACK YOUR PSP FOR WIRELESS WEB ACCESS

Those of you who bought *Wipeout Pure* looking for downloadable content on launch day might have been disappointed to see "*Wipeout Pure* downloads coming soon…hold on!" after selecting "downloads" from the Main menu. As of press time (two weeks after launch), there are still none available. But one network-savvy PSP owner, who goes by the name of fugimax, figured out a way to put that Internet-ready code to use. And it involves absolutely no risk to the game—or your PSP.

For this experiment, you'll need your PSP configured to access a wireless hot spot. Create a new infrastructure-network connection identical to your standard connection and select Custom for the Address Settings. Choose Automatic for IP Address Settings (unless your hot spot has specific IP requirements; speak to your provider if you're not sure), but select Manual for DNS Settings. Now, for the Primary DNS, enter the following number: 67.171.70.72. (Leave the Secondary DNS at 0.0.0.0.) Confirm your settings and save.

Now load up *Wipeout Pure* and go to downloads. Instead of the "Hold on!" screen, you'll be greeted with a simple portal that fugimax set up with some gamer-friendly links on it. You're not limited to the sites he links to, however: There's a URL entry box at the bottom you can use to check out any site you like.

The shoulder buttons appear to equate to the Back and Forward buttons in a standard browser, Square is Stop, Circle is Refresh, and X selects links. Simply scroll around with the D-pad to see areas offscreen. Of course, most websites aren't currently formatted for PSP viewing, but you'll be surprised by how good some of them look. For a striking demonstration of the PSP's screen, for example, you might visit news.yahoo.com and look at any recent news image. Now load it up on a PC and notice the difference.

It's a given that one day soon an official Web browser will be released for PSP…but until then, you can experience yet another amazing feature of this amazing little machine.

Thanks to fugimax for creating this simple hack. Visit his site at genius.fugimax.com to see if he's come up with anything new and also to tell him how freakin' cool he is. «

WIRELESS CONTROLLER

If you want to cut the most obvious of wires, our recommendation is Logitech's Cordless Action Controller for PS2. The signal is strong, and battery longevity is good (the company's claim of more than 50 hours with rumble effects turned on is right on in our experience).

TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in black bars indicate a Greatest Hits title. Names in orange indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡ indicates the game supports online play.

PSP

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	●●●	92
Lumines	Ubisoft	●●●●	92
Metal Gear Acid	Konami	●●●●	92
Need for Speed Underground Rivals	EA Games	●●●◖	92
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA Sports Big	●●●	93

Create a profile, then enter these codes in the Cheats menu. (Note: codes are case sensitive.)

AFC EAST ALL-STARS	EAASFSCT
AFC NORTH ALL-STARS	NAOFRCTH
AFC SOUTH ALL-STARS	SAOFUCTH
AFC WEST ALL-STARS	WAEFSCT
EA FIELD	EAField
FUMBLE MODE (other team fumbles)	GreasedPig
GARGANTUAN PLAYERS	BIGSmash
MAX CATCH	MagnetHands
NFC EAST ALL-STARS	NNOFRCTH
NFC NORTH ALL-STARS	NNAS66784
NFC SOUTH ALL-STARS	SNOFUCTH
NO-FUMBLE MODE	GlueHands
REEBOK TEAM	Reebok
UNLIMITED TURBO	NozBoost

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ridge Racer	Namco	●●●●◖	92
⚡Twisted Metal: Head-On	Sony CEA	●●●●	93

Here are codes to break open your gameplay and lay down a world of hurt to all who cross your path.

Enter these codes while playing. Do not pause the game.

INVULNERABILITY

Right, Left, Down, Up, and finally press L + R together

INFINITE WEAPONS

Triangle, Triangle, Down, Down, L + R

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Untold Legends: Brotherhood...	Sony Online Ent.	●●●	92

PS2

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	**●●●●◖**	**51**
Ace Combat 5: The Unsung War	Namco	●●●●	87
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◖	81
Alien Hominid	0-3 Entertainment	●●●●	88
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Ape Escape: Primed & Pumped	Ubisoft	●●◖	88
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
⚡Area 51	Midway	●●●●	90
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Armored Core: Nexus	Agetec	●●	85
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
Asterix & Obelix Kick Buttix	Atari	●●◖	85
Astro Boy	Sega	●●●	85
Atari Anthology	Atari	●●	89
Athens 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	83
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**42**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 2	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**64**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 3	Sony CEA	●●●●	88
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◖	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes the Neighborhood	Eidos	●◖	89
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**Interplay**	**●●●●◖**	**52**
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
The Bard's Tale	Vivendi Universal	●●●●◖	86
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Assault 3	Bandai	●●◖	88
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
BloodRayne 2	Majesco	●●●●◖	87
Blood Will Tell	Sega	●●●●	87
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
⚡Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30	Ubisoft	●●●	92
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◖	73
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	Bam	●●●●	82
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63
⚡Burnout 3: Takedown	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**85**
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	**Activision**	**●●◖**	**67**
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adv.	Activision	●●●	90
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	**Activision**	**●●◖**	**76**
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◖	74
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season	Activision	●●●●◖	85
⚡Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision	●●●●	89
Capcom Fighting Evolution	Capcom	●◖	88
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◖	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◖	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
Catwoman	EA Games	●	84
⚡Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◖	78
⚡Champions: Return to Arms	Sony Online	●●●●◖	90
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◖	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69

THE BURNING IS LOVE

In case you missed it in Hype this month, we recently got exclusive hands-on time with *Burnout* on PSP, and may we just say: Holy. Crap. It feels *just* like *Burnout 3*, except you can carry it around with you and never be parted.

WATERY KILLER

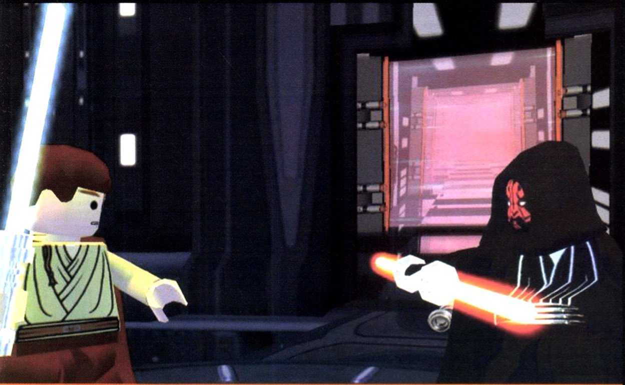
Did you know that the developers of the forthcoming (and surprisingly graphic) *Jaws* game are the same folks behind the endearingly sweet (some might say sickeningly sweet) *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future*? How's that for a one-eighty?

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
ChoroQ	Atlus	●●●◖	86
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Cold Fear	Ubisoft	●●●	92
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	**●●●●●**	**68**
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim	●●●	83
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	**Gotham Games**	**●◖**	**63**
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict: Vietnam	Global Star	●●◖	86
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Constantine	THQ	●●●	92
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◖	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	**●●●◖**	**51**
⚡Crash 'N' Burn	Eidos	●●	87
Crash Nitro Kart	**Vivendi Universal**	**●●●◖**	**76**
Crash Twinsanity	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	86
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	**●●●●**	**46**
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◖	80
Crimson Tears	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◖	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◖	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●◖**	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◖	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	**●●●◖**	**50**
DDR Extreme	Konami	●●●●	85
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◖	39
Dead to Rights	**Namco**	**●●●**	**65**
Death by Degrees	Namco	●◖	90
Def Jam Vendetta	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**67**
Def Jam Fight for NY	EA Games	●●●●◖	85
Defender	Midway	●●●◖	62
⚡Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◖	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◖	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	**●●●●●**	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	**Capcom**	**●●●**	**66**
Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening	Capcom	●●●●◖	91

UNLOCK ALL THE MODES, COSTUMES, AND GALLERY

At the Start menu, hold down L1, L2, R1, and R2, and rotate the left analog stick until you hear "Devil May Cry."

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai	●●●	88
Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◖	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◖	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◖	64
A Dog's Life	Hip Interactive	●●	84
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◖	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◖	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	**Atari**	**●●●◖**	**65**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	**Atari**	**●●◖**	**76**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3	Atari	●●●●	88
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◖	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78
DRIV3R	Atari	●●●◖	83
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Duel Masters	Atari	●●●	89
The Dukes of Hazzard: Return of the General Lee	Ubisoft	●●●◖	87
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61



LEGO STAR WARS

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

STAR WARS RACER REVENGE

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

STAR WARS

VISIT THAT FARAWAY GALAXY ON YOUR PS2

So you think it just might be possible that *Episode III* won't entirely redeem the debacle that is the prequel trilogy? Yeah, us too. To help you get the bad taste out of your mouth, we've put together a refreshing palate cleanser of *Star Wars* entertainment that's good—you can even check out two of them (*Lego Star Wars* and *Star Wars Battlefront*) on this month's disc!

LEGO STAR WARS

Darth Maul has been described with many adjectives—"evil," "menacing," "terrifying"—but *Lego Star Wars* marks the first time that "adorable" has been one of them. This game lets you relive the prequel trilogy in Legoland—play as Lego versions of Obi-Wan, Yoda, even R2-D2. There's also co-op play available, and with the tokens you collect along the way, you can purchase playable versions of popular characters such as Jango Fett and Darth Vader. *Lego Star Wars* sets a great precedent for movie games by cutting out all the boring bits of the trilogy. Our only complaint is that cutting out the boring parts means the game is pretty short.

OPM RATING [●●●●○]

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

The *Star Wars* movies may be full of wooden acting and hack dialogue, but it's hard to argue the greatness of the battles. And therein lies the beauty of *Battlefront*: It gives you the opportunity to be a part of every major *Star Wars* battle. Choose whether to play on the side of the Rebels or the Empire, the Republic or the Trade Federation. While the game's strengths lie in the multiplayer aspect, *Battlefront*'s fun to tackle on your own as well. Strap on that ray gun and enjoy.

OPM RATING [●●●●◐]

STAR WARS RACER REVENGE

Back in 1999, everyone agreed that *Star Wars Racer* was the best game to emerge from the *Episode I* hypefest. Made for the N64, it's based on the pod-racing sequences in *The Phantom Menace*, one of the few high points of George Lucas' muddled work. But as good as that original game is, no one was begging for a sequel, especially on a different platform. Which isn't to say developer Rainbow Studios (*Splashdown* and the excellent first two *ATV Offroad Furys*) didn't deliver a strong effort in *Star Wars Racer Revenge*. Set eight years after *Episode I*, Sebulba is back for more spanking by Anakin on the pod-racing circuit in 13 tracks across five worlds. With an emphasis on aggressive action, *Racer Revenge*'s control is tight and its track design is competent. The only big letdown? It is short, very short (most could finish the game in about five hours).

OPM RATING [●●●●◐]

STAR WARS STARFIGHTER

LucasArts' first game for the PS2 draws upon the company's legacy of pretty darn good flight-based games set in the *Star Wars* universe (like *Rebel Assault* and *X-Wing* for the PC and *Rogue Squadron* for the N64). The result is, well, pretty darn good. In 14 well-designed missions, *Star Wars Starfighter* lets you pilot one of three distinct craft, with the Naboo N-1 starfighter the centerpiece. While it isn't the longest game you'll ever play and a few of the missions could have benefited from a bit more polish, *Star Wars Starfighter* offers action aplenty and to this day is one of the better flight-based games for the PS2.

OPM RATING [●●●●◐]

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	**Koei**	**●●●●**	**85**
Dynasty Warriors 5	Koei	●●●◖	92
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Echo Night: Beyond	Agetec	●●●	84
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	**Atari**	**●●●**	**71**
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**●●●●●**	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	76
⚡ESPN College Hoops 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	88
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	87
⚡ESPN NBA Basketball	**ESPN Videogames**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡ESPN NFL Football	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	72
⚡ESPN NFL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	84
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	73
⚡ESPN NHL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	85
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: AntiGrav	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	87
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fairly OddParents: Shadow Showdown	THQ	●●●◖	88
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2005	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**86**
⚡FIFA Street	EA Sports	●●◖	91
Fight Club	Vivendi Universal	●◖	87
⚡Fight Night 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●**	**80**
⚡Fight Night Round 2	EA Sports	●●●●◖	91

UNLOCK ALL VENUES

In the Game Mode screen, tap Left until you hear a bell ring.

TINY BOXERS

At the Select Venue screen, tap Up until you hear a bell ring.

UNLOCK FABOLOUS

Create a boxer with the first or last name as GETFAB. Save the boxer, then in play now or hard hits, Fabolous will be in the heavyweight division.

I AM JACK'S CRAPPY GAME

The first rule of *Fight Club*: You do not talk about how much *Fight Club* sucks. The second rule of *Fight Club*: YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT HOW MUCH *FIGHT CLUB* SUCKS. The third rule of *Fight Club*: no more dumb *Fight Club* spoofs.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
⚡Final Fantasy XI: Chains of Promathia	Square Enix USA	●●●●	87
Finding Nemo	**THQ**	**●●●◖**	**71**
Finny the Fish and the Seven Waters	Natsume	●●	91
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone	Atari	●●●◖	86
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
Front Mission 4	Square Enix	●●●●	82
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
Fullmetal Alchemist	Square Enix	●●●	89
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◖	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle	Bandai	●●◖	82
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gallop Racer 2004	Tecmo	●●●●	85
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
The Getaway: Black Monday	Sony CEA	●●	89
Get on da Mic	Eidos	●●	87
Ghosthunter	Namco	●●◖	84
Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex	Bandai	●●	87
⚡Ghost Recon 2	Ubisoft	●●●	89
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
God of War	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**92**
GoDai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Godzilla: Save the Earth	Atari	●●◖	88
⚡GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA Games	●●●	89
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gradius V	Konami	●●●◖	85
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**46**
Gran Turismo 4	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**91**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**87**
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**63**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
⚡Gretzky NHL 2005	Sony CEA	●●◖	88
⚡Growlanser Generations	Working Designs	●●●●	88
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear Isuka	Sammy	●●●●	86
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungrave: Overdose	Mastiff	●●●◖	86
GunGriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
The Guy Game	Gathering	●	85
Half-Life	**Sierra**	**●●●●●**	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	**EA Games**	**●●●**	**75**
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA Games	●●●●	82

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Headhunter: Redemption	Sega	●●●	86
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	**Eidos**	**●●●●◖**	**63**
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**55**
⚡Hot Shots Golf Fore!	Sony CEA	●●●◖	85
⚡Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	THQ	●●●◖	89
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	**Vivendi Universal**	**●●●●**	**70**
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**50**
The Incredibles	THQ	●●●◖	88
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Inuyasha: The Secret of the Cursed Mask	Bandai	●	89
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Jak II	**Sony CEA**	**●●●◖**	**74**
Jak 3	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	87
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	**●●●●**	**52**
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79
James Bond 007: NightFire	**EA Games**	**●●●●◖**	**64**
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ	●●●	88
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Karaoke Revolution Volume 2	Konami	●●●●◖	83
Karaoke Revolution Volume 3	Konami	●●●●◖	87
Katamari Damacy	Namco	●●●●◖	86
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
Kessen III	Koei	●●●	91
kill.switch	**Namco**	**●●●●◖**	**75**
⚡Killzone	Sony CEA	●●●●	87
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
King Arthur	Konami	●	88
King of Fighters 2000/2001	SNK Playmore	●●◖	76
King of Fighters 2002/2003	SNK Playmore	●●●●	88
King of Fighters: Maximum Impact	SNK Playmore	●●●	87
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	**Square EA**	**●●●●◖**	**61**
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kuon	Agetec	●●◖	87
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54

PENNY ARCADE

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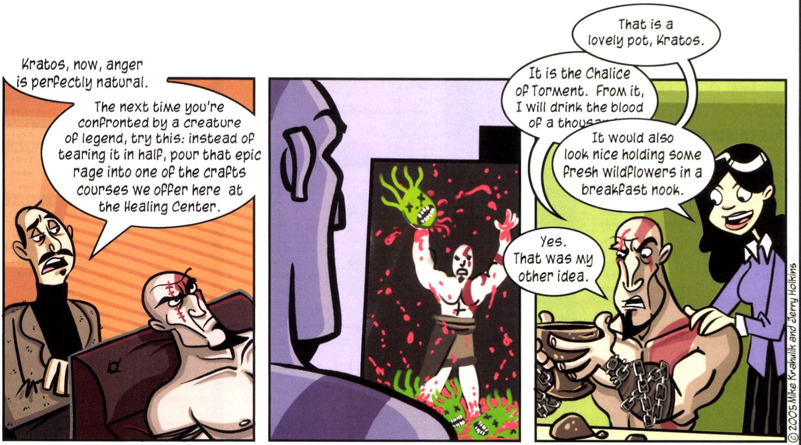
Kratos, now, anger is perfectly natural.
The next time you're confronted by a creature of legend, try this: instead of tearing it in half, pour that epic rage into one of the crafts courses we offer here at the Healing Center.
That is a lovely pot, Kratos.
It is the Chalice of Torment. From it, I will drink the blood of a thous
It would also look nice holding some fresh wildflowers in a breakfast nook.
Yes. That was my other idea.
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GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Lego Star Wars	Giant Int.	●●●●	92
Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	87
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	Activision	●●	89
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**75**
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	EA Games	●●	88
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	**EA Games**	**●●●●◖**	**63**
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡Madden NFL 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**60**
⚡Madden NFL 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**72**
⚡Madden NFL 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
⚡Major League Baseball 2K5	2K Games	●●●●	91
Malice	Mud Duck	●●◖	84
Manhunt	**Rockstar**	**●●●◖**	**76**
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	**Rockstar**	**●●●●**	**53**
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◖	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	**Capcom**	**●●●◖**	**54**
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
McFarlane's Evil Prophecy	Konami	◖	84
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◖	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**58**
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	**EA Games**	**●●●◖**	**76**
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Mega Man X: Command Mission	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◖	74
Mega Man X8	Capcom	●●●	88
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◖	60
Mercenaries	LucasArts	●●●●◖	89
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**88**
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	**●●●●**	**39**
⚡Midnight Club II	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◖	76
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	Midway	●●●●	87
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◖	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◖	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◖	80
⚡MLB 2006	Sony CEA	●●●◖	91
MLB SlugFest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB SlugFest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
⚡MLB SlugFest: Loaded	Midway	●●●◖	83
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◖	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◖	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◖	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◖	77
Monster Hunter	Capcom	●●●●	86
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◖	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◖	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	**Midway**	**●●●●**	**64**
⚡Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway	●●●●	87
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP 2	Namco	●●●●◖	53
MotoGP 3	Namco	●●●●◖	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix	Codemasters	●●●◖	82
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◖	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◖	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◖	52
Musashi Samurai Legend	Square Enix	●●●	91
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	80
⚡MVP Baseball 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	91
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◖	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◖	59
⚡MX vs. ATV Unleashed	THQ	●●●●	91
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◖	64

DUB YOUR RIDE

Wondering how *Dub Magazine* impacted the development of one of the first (and possibly best) of the free-roaming racing games? Check out this month's review of *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition* on page 88. You may be surprised by what you find.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
MX Unleashed	**THQ**	●●●	**79**
Namco Museum	**Namco**	●●●◖	**53**
Nano Breaker	Konami	●●◖	90
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◖	40
⚡**NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup**	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**85**
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	62
⚡**NASCAR Thunder 2004**	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◖	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**53**
⚡**NBA 2K3**	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**63**
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◖	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◖	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	75
⚡NBA Live 2005	EA Sports	●●●●	86
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◖	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**68**
⚡NBA Street V3	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	90

It's all about the shoes! The following table breaks down how to unlock all the must-have kicks for your superstars' feet.

UNLOCKABLE SHOES

SHOES Where Unlocked	STREET VALUE
RBK ATR BOOM DIZZLE WHITE/SILVER Street Challenge: Win the Rbk 3-on-3 Challenge 1 event	500
RBK S CARTER BB II WHITE/BLUE Street Challenge: Win the Rbk 3-on-3 Challenge 2 event	500
RBK CL BB FISSURE BROWN Street Challenge: Win the Rbk 3-on-3 Challenge 3 event	500
RBK BOULEVARD Street Challenge: Win the EA Sports Big Concrete Classic Tournament at Brighton Beach	500
RBK BLACKTOP PUMP Street Challenge: Win the EA Sports Big Concrete Classic Tournament at Gun Hill	500
RBK QUESTION II MID BLACK/BLACK Street Challenge: Win a Rbk Invitational Tournament at Rucker Park	500
RBK ATR PUMP WHITE/BLUE/RED Street Challenge: Win the Rbk Challenge Dunk Contest Tournament	1000
RBK ATR CLEAR OUT Street Challenge: Win the Rbk Invitational Tournament at Venice Beach	1500
RBK HIGH POST BLACK/RED Street Challenge: Win a Rbk Invitational Tournament at Rucker Park	1500
RBK HIGH POST WHITE/RED Street Challenge: Win the History Lesson Part 1 Dunk Contest Tournament	1500
RBK ATR 2ND COMING WHITE/BLUE Street Challenge: Win the History Lesson Part 2 Dunk Contest Tournament	1500
RBK ANSWER 8 WHITE/RED Street Challenge: Win the Future Of Flight Dunk Contest Tournament	1500
RBK ANSWER 8 WHITE/BLACK Street Challenge: Win the Legendary Status Dunk Contest Tournament	1500

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◖	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡**NCAA Football 2004**	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**71**
⚡NCAA Football 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◖	41

STREET ON THE STREET

Sure, EA did a decent enough job with *NFL Street 2*, but perhaps you're wondering how the game make the translation to PSP? Find out in this month's review of *NFL Street 2: Unleashed*. You'll find it on page 99.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
⚡NCAA March Madness 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	88
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**62**
⚡**Need for Speed Underground**	**EA Games**	●●●●◖	**76**
⚡**Need for Speed Underground 2**	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**87**
Neo Contra	Konami	●●●◖	87
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●◖	**52**
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◖	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
⚡**NFL Street**	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●◖	**78**
⚡NFL Street 2	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	89
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
⚡NHL 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	85
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Nick Toons: Movin'	THQ	●●●	88
Nightmare of Druaga	Namco	●●	87
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	●●●●	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	**Capcom**	●●●●	**60**
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◖	81
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
⚡Outlaw Golf 2	Global Star	●◖	88
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**54**
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Phantom Brave	NIS America	●●●●◖	85
Pinball Hall of Fame	Crave	●◖	90
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Playboy: The Mansion	Arush Ent.	●●	91
The Polar Express	THQ	●●●	88
Pool Paradise	Ignition	●●●◖	83
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
Power Drome	Mud Duck	●	84
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	THQ	●●	88
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**75**
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubisoft	●●●●	88
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
⚡Project: Snowblind	Eidos	●●●●	91
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	●●●●◖	82
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
The Punisher	THQ	●●●◖	90
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III: Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Rapala Pro Fishing	Activision	●●◖	85

SNOW BUSINESS

If you're looking for a very deep—and *very* hardcore—first-person shooter to play online, you could do a lot worse than *Project: Snowblind*. The single-player campaign is decent enough, but the online play is where the game really shines.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
⚡**Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal**	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**87**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	●●●●	82
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Red Ninja: End of Honor	Vivendi Universal	●●	92
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Resident Evil Outbreak	Capcom	●●●◖	81
⚡Resident Evil Outbreak: File #2	Capcom	●◖	92
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ribbit King	Bandai	●●●	82
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise of the Kasai	Sony CEA	●●●◖	92
Rise to Honor	**Sony CEA**	●●●	**78**
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Robotech: Invasion	Global Star	●●●	86
Robots	Vivendi Universal	●	92
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Rocky Legends	Ubisoft	●●◖	87
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
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Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
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Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
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Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
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Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
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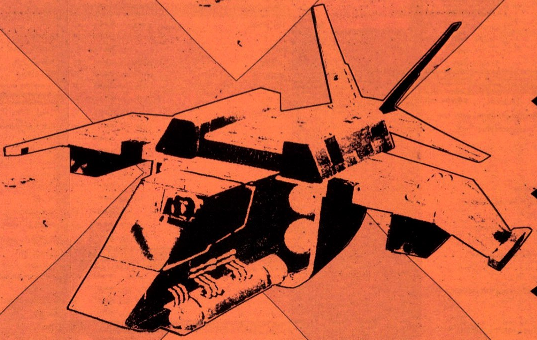
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
Sega Superstars	Sega	●●●●	88
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow Hearts: Covenant	Midway	●●●●	86
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow of Rome	Capcom	●●●●	89

XA - 165



STATUS

WARHAWK

BUILT FOR REPLAY
BY OPM

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...

WARHAWK

DID TWISTED METAL SNUFF OUT THIS CULT-CLASSIC SHOOTER?

In the early days of the PlayStation, Singletrac seemed to base its games on bizarre vehicle hybrids: *Twisted Metal* bolted a tank's arsenal onto ordinary cars and trucks; *Jet Moto*'s fictional bike was the love child of a Jet Ski and a hovercraft—with a rocket engine thrown in for good measure; and *Warhawk*, the studio's first game, fused a helicopter gunship with a fighter jet. The recipe seemed to work. *Twisted Metal* thrives today, with versions on the PS2 and PSP, and *Jet Moto* had two sequels before puttering out. *Warhawk*, however, never resurfaced.

The game's disappearance wasn't due to any lack of love. *Electronic Gaming Monthly* gave it three 9.0s and a 9.5 (out of 10). They showered it with back-of-the-box praise, calling it "everything you could ever want from a game." "I've waited my entire life for a game like *Warhawk*," wrote another reviewer. "Excellent control, killer graphics, and smokin' sound effects are just the beginning." ...Or the end.

EGM considered *Warhawk* a flight sim, likely due to its 3D graphics. The year was 1995 after all, and PlayStation was fresh from the factory. Polygons were still mostly in the realm of PC games, where crude 3D simulated every trivial detail of flight (see *Microsoft Flight Simulator*). *Warhawk*'s in-the-cockpit view invites such comparisons. Outside the cockpit, though, the game eschews reality for sci-fi landscapes swarming with strange enemy aircraft. The levels themselves span all manner of terrain and setting, from deep canyons lined with gun turrets to a desert flanked by weaponized pyramids. One particularly clever level sends you gunning after a giant flying aircraft carrier (again with the mutant machines), which you defeat by weaving through a series of elevator shafts and hallways inside the ship. But while *Warhawk* has no basis in reality, it presents itself realistically, a path followed by many modern games, from *Burnout 3* to *God of War*. The aircraft may not behave according to the laws of physics, but when you die in *Warhawk*, huge pixels of brown and red blood splatter across the cockpit.

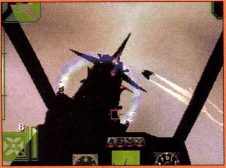
Unsurprisingly, what folks considered "killer graphics" 10 years ago look incredibly primitive today. The environments are so devoid of texture and detail that they look sterile, almost abstract. Large panels of flat color and gritty edges blur across the screen. *Warhawk* showed both the promise and the peril of 3D. The open environments and 360-degree range of motion create a sense of freedom, but that same openness threatens the pacing of the action. 2D shooters usually lead you down a scripted path, with your enemies attacking on cue. In *Warhawk*, you decide where to go and when. It seems Singletrac's solution was to inundate the player with as many targets and enemies as possible. To most modern gamers, *Warhawk* would seem chaotic.

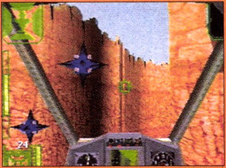
Like many games in the early days of CD-based gaming consoles, *Warhawk* tells its story via live-action video clips. The pilots, Hatch and Walker, are played by a couple of *Miami Vice* casting call rejects with Ken-doll hair, their costumes apparently made of spray-painted skateboard and football pads strapped over flight suits. Between levels, we're treated to spats between the pair and their female commander, Jassic, whose over-the-top, cross-eyed intensity makes for good, if unintentional, laughs. You can't beat dialogue like "I don't like mysteries, corporal. They have a way of killing people."

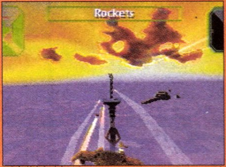
Warhawk's disappearance from the scene could have something to do with *Twisted Metal*, Singletrac's cash cow hit series. The games share quite a few similarities, notably a dark visual style and nearly identical button configuration. The power-ups you collect along the way in *Warhawk* also evoke *TM*'s homing missiles, rockets, and the like. Singletrac's car-combat game made a much bigger splash than its air-combat title, and the company quickly turned out *Twisted Metal 2*. Shortly thereafter, Singletrac parted ways with Sony, which had published all of its games up until that point. Sony owned the rights to Singletrac's work, so a *Warhawk* sequel was out of the picture at that point. Technically, Sony could have handed the game off to 989 Studios, as it did with *Twisted Metal* (with horrible results), but, thankfully, it didn't.

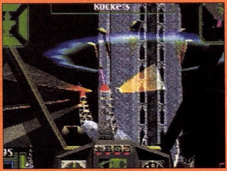
POLYGONS WERE STILL MOSTLY IN THE REALM OF PC GAMES....

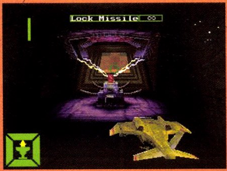
When Singletrac (rechristened Incog—that's right, the very same people who brought you the awesome *God of War*) returned to Sony's publishing fold in 2001, it set out to revive the flagging *Twisted Metal* franchise with *Twisted Metal: Black*. Those holding out for a new *Warhawk* may have been disappointed, but the game's chopper/jet did make a cameo as *Black*'s final boss, proving that the cult-classic shooter still held a special place in its designers' hearts. Could we see a *Twisted Metal: Head-On*–style PSP revival? Or perhaps a triumphant return on PS3? Now that both *Head-On* and *God of War* have been released, things have gotten suspiciously quiet at Incog. Could the studio be up to something? Only time will tell. « *Robert Ashley*

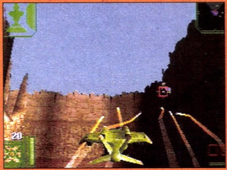












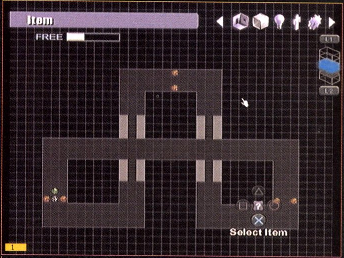
TALK ABOUT OVERQUALIFIED!

Wondering where the developers of *Warhawk* got their flight-sim savvy? According to reports, some of the employees of Singletrac who worked on the game had spent some time doing work for NASA and the defense industry. We think that's neat...and a little scary.

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT

BUILDING THE PERFECT MAP

Now that *TimeSplitters* has finally made it online, a thriving trade in user-created maps has sprung up. But let's face it—most of them are crap. It takes more than sticking a few blocks together to build a great map. So in the interest of improving everyone's mapmaking abilities, we went to *TimeSplitters* developer Free Radical for some tips on making maps that are interesting, user-friendly, and fun.



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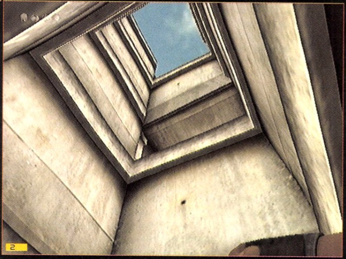

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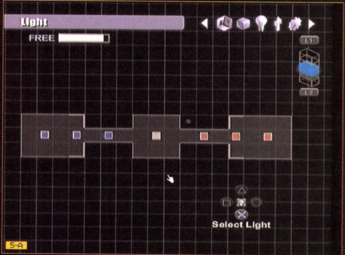
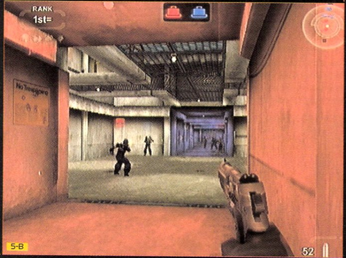


5-A



5-B

1. Don't be overambitious. Enormous, sprawling layouts might look pretty in the editor, but they could be daunting or confusing in the game.

2. Experiment with combinations of stackable and nonstackable tiles to make interesting vertical spaces.

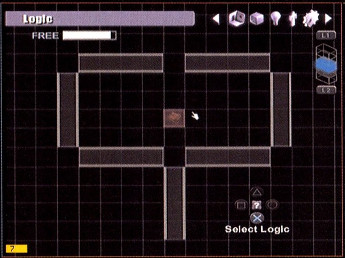
3. Make a point of regularly previewing the map for playability when constructing it. You'll spot potential problems and you're also more likely to think of interesting ideas as you move through it.

4. When working on a map, save different versions and rename them. You may want to go back and take things in a different direction.

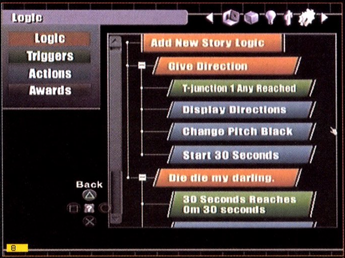
5. If you're making a symmetrical team deathmatch or capture-the-bag map, add details to make areas distinctive and help players navigate the map. Use color subtly to define areas of interest (e.g., team starts) or use some different tiles in key areas.

6. Test logic in simple cases before combining elements to make more complicated functions.

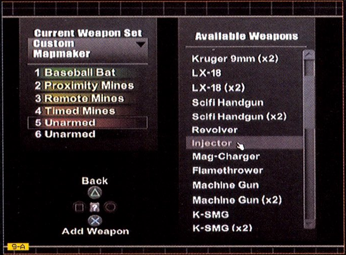
7. It is likely that you will want to experiment with different locations for items or objects with associated logic. By placing these objects on 1x1 tiles, you can easily move the tiles around the map to try fresh combinations. You can make things more permanent later.


Logic
FREE
L1
L2
Select Logic

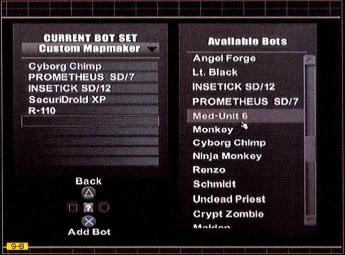
7


Logic
Logic
Triggers
Actions
Awards
Add New Story Logic
Give Direction
T-junction 1 Any Reached
Display Directions
Change Pitch Black
Start 30 Seconds
Die die my darling.
30 Seconds Reaches
0m 30 seconds
Back

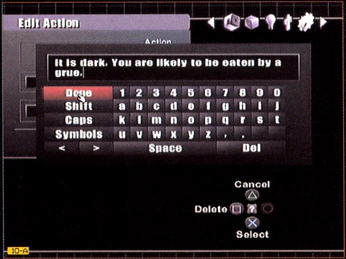
8


Current Weapon Set
Custom
Mapmaker
1 Baseball Bat
2 Proximity Mines
3 Remote Mines
4 Timed Mines
5 Unarmed
6 Unarmed
Available Weapons
Kruger 9mm (x2)
LX-18
LX-18 (x2)
Scifi Handgun
Scifi Handgun (x2)
Revolver
Injector
Mag-Charger
Flamethrower
Machine Gun
Machine Gun (x2)
K-SMG
K-SMG (x2)
Back
Add Weapon

9-A

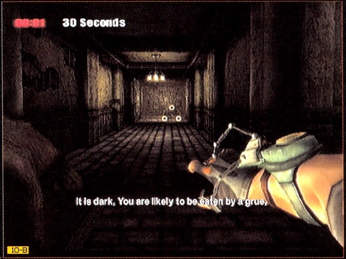

CURRENT BOT SET
Custom Mapmaker
Cyborg Chimp
PROMETHEUS SD/7
INSETICK SD/12
SecuriDroid XP
R-110
Available Bots
Angel Forge
Lt. Black
INSETICK SD/12
PROMETHEUS SD/7
Med-Unit 6
Monkey
Cyborg Chimp
Ninja Monkey
Renzo
Schmidt
Undead Priest
Crypt Zombie
Back
Add Bot

9-B


Edit Action
Action
Done
Shift
Caps
Symbols
Space
Del
Cancel
Delete
Select

It is dark. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.

10-A


00:01
30 Seconds

It is dark. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.

10-B

8. When you're happy with how your logic is functioning, take some time to edit the names of counters and locations. This will help others see how your map works and will also help you if you revisit it later and want to refine or change things.

9. Use custom character and weapon sets to theme your story maps. Changing character strengths and weapon types can radically change the map's difficulty and playability.

10. Remember that someone playing a new story map needs as much help as possible to know what to do. Use the description, briefing, objectives, and display messages to point them in the right direction.

11. You will probably be better at playing your story map than almost anyone playing it fresh, since you will have gained experience testing it. Don't make things too hard or you'll put people off! It's a bigger challenge to make something entertaining than something unplayably hard. «

YOUR TURN

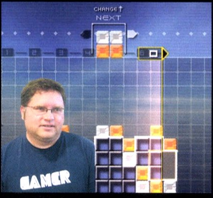
Do you have your own suggestions about making the perfect *TimeSplitters* map? Send them to opm@ziffdavis.com with the subject line reading "TimeSplitters User Maps" and you may see them printed in a future issue of *OPM*.

MULTIPLAYER UPDATE

You may remember from our review last month that we had some issues with online play in the early version of the game we were using for the review. Now that the game is out, we're happy to report that most online games run quite smoothly for us. There is the occasional stutter, and it's not uncommon to discover you're unable to join a game (this is likely due to the host being behind a firewall), but when it works, it works really well. It may not be the deepest online shooter on PS2, but it's possibly the fastest.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH LUMINES?

AND THE LESSONS THAT MAY BE LEARNED



Wait just a minute here: Shouldn't *Lumines*, that maddeningly mesmerizing "*Tetris*" for the PSP, be a complete and total failure? Where's the blood, the dirty language, the hip-hop stars, the *GTA*/urban settings and characters? Where's the racing mode? Where's its military stealth/squad multiplayer features? Where, oh where, is the sex?!

By today's standards, *Lumines* should never have seen the light of day. It's hauntingly addictive (I've missed bus stops playing it). It's inventive, smart, and the ideal game for a handheld system (along with RPGs). It was created with fun and challenge in mind, not cynical marketing tactics.

Ah, if only game publishers would make more "mistakes" like *Lumines*.

Our second straight cover featuring a racing game from EA is no mistake. *Need for Speed* is one of the hottest PS2 gaming—let alone racing—franchises today. How could we not send Giancarlo off to the northerly climes of Vancouver, British Columbia, to get the lowdown on what's bound to be one of the "most wanted" games of the year. « *Tom Byron*

THE OPM FAMILY

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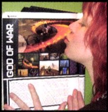
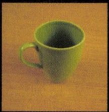


DANA JONGEWAARD has been nostalgic for the May issue, because she would much rather kick butt as Kratos than be a robot who runs like C-3PO and gets beaten up or a student who is too stupid to leave the possessed high school by just walking out of the parking lot.

JOE RYBICKI spotted his first random forty-something playing PSP on the ferry ride into work recently. Considering Joe's played nothing *but* PSP since launch day, he couldn't be happier. Unfortunately, he didn't have his copy of *Wipeout* handy to challenge the guy.

THIERRY NGUYEN loves *Sin City* so much that he decided to stop being a colorful games editor and is now trying to become a black-and-white psychotic cannibal. He's practicing by eating the characters of other systems before graduating into full-blown people munching.



GIANCARLO VARANINI wonders what would happen if EA decided to replace the cars in *Need for Speed* with donuts and the cops with cups of coffee. When the donuts turned around to face the coffee, they would say, "The hunter has become the hunted." Yes.

LOGAN PARR has let too many people know that he has a couple of kittens and has now been inundated with cat memorabilia! Websites of cats sleeping in the most bizarre positions! Calendars of cats sleeping! Screensavers of…um, cats sleeping…. Hey! Do they do anything else?!

RYAN VULK has been using his pterodactyl technique to utterly molest all takers in *Soul Calibur II*. The technique involves distracting his opponents with an elbow to the junk and then knocking them out of the ring like a cheap little girl. One of these days, we'll take him…but not today.

ALEJANDRO CHAVETTA wants to take this opportunity to wish Sheri, who probably is the coolest mom ever, a happy Mother's Day. She spent endless hours in the cold waiting in line just to buy a PSP for her son. This one goes to you, Sheri, because you are awesome.

DOWN. PLEASUR

TODD ZUNIGA is desperate for some *Winning Eleven* action on PSP. How desperate, you ask? Desperate enough to dress up in a monkey suit and harass Konami employees. His pleas were undermined by the fact that he was carrying a PSP with *World Tour Soccer* in it, though.

ZOE FLOWER has not been heard from since starting god mode in *God of War*. If you have any tips as to her whereabouts, please let us know. We've already called all the hospitals, sanitariums, suicide prevention centers, and anger management clinics in Vancouver, though, so don't bother looking there.

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THE SPORTS GUY

FAIR PLAY

TODD ZUNIGA
is a former OPMer living in NYC. If you want to invite him to a Mets game or just have a question, contact him at thesportsguy@ziffdavis.com.

I'm sick, tired, and jittery with agitation over the general rule that online sports gamers are, by and large, monster turds. When I'm sports-gaming alone, I often think: Hey, I should go online and find some human competition! Then I remember that the first 20 minutes of my search will be spent chitchatting in rooms, trying to avoid the pool of jerk-offs who pride themselves on going for it on every fourth down—even if they're backed up to their own 2-yard line. If I'm lucky enough to get into a game, my stomach capsizes when I realize I'm playing some hump who uses an online glitch over and over and over, or I'm struck with *The Ring Two*–type dread when I'm winning because my opponent might disconnect.

Instead, I end up calling my mates from around the country and am usually met with sleepy-voiced wives and just-woken girlfriends asking why I'm calling so late. Then I realize I'm the only ass-clown in my circle of friends up until 2 a.m. who's ignoring his girlfriend while trying to scare up a late-night game of *Madden*.

My latest concern is that I'll be playing my PSP on the Q into Manhattan and link up to some guy for a three-inning affair of *MVP*. He'll have discovered some Wi-Fi glitch, and then I'll call him names from across the train (something he deserves) and then he will punch me in the face (something he thinks I deserve and something I don't like).

Is losing really so bad? Are we so frustrated by how much life kicks the crap out of us on a day-to-day basis (woe is me: Jennifer doesn't like me; I bounced my rent check; this isn't butter it's cream cheese!) that we take it out in an online game of *NBA 2K5*? Where's the sense of playing by the rules, the sense of fairness?

Not only does it make me hate people—something I only fake doing, usually—it also hurts the games. The worst part is that developers spend a ridiculous amount of time guarding against this utter turdosity. I'd estimate that around 30 percent of online programming time is spent trying to stop cheating. That's a lot of man hours that could be dedicated to adding in awards or other online game modes.

Can't someone start something like a "ThisGuySucksOnline.com" site (if it's not already a porn site) and post the names of online gamers who cheat, so no one will make the mistake of playing them? Otherwise, I know I'm going to go hothead in public and get walloped and none of us—especially me—needs that.

Moving on: I hate the Raiders and their acquisition of Randy Moss. They're going to be a terror in *Madden 2006*. I hate that, too.

The NBA opted for a five-company deal, meaning no exclusivity for over five years. The NBA might have a watered-down brand on the court, but on the console there are still solid games with lots to prove and improve upon. This is excellent news.

Winning Eleven 8 hasn't been announced for PSP—get on with it, Konami! I'm stuck trading off between *WTS* and *FIFA* over here! «

CAN'T SOMEONE POST THE NAMES OF ONLINE GAMERS WHO CHEAT?

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaman King: Power of Spirit	Konami	●●◖	89
Shark Tale	Activision	●●◖	88
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos	●●	85
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga	Atlus	●●●●	92
Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne	Atlus	●●●●◖	86
Shining Tears	Sega	●●●	90
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●◖	83
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek 2	Activision	●●●◖	82
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	**●●●●◖**	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Hill 4: The Room	Konami	●●●●◖	85
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	**●●●**	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sitting Ducks	Hip Interactive	●●●	88
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**62**
Sly 2: Band of Thieves	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**86**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2	Namco	●●●●	82
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	**●●●●◖**	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	●●●	88
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	**●●●●●**	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	**●●●●◖**	**57**
Spider-Man 2	Activision	●●●◖	84
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	**●●●●●**	**72**
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◖	75
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ	●●●●◖	87
Spy Fiction	Sammy	●●	85
SpyHunter	**Midway**	**●●●●◖**	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	**Vivendi Universal**	**●●●**	**64**
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	Vivendi Universal	●●	87
⚡SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●●**	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●●**	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●●**	**74**
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	Square Enix	●●●●	84
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars Battlefront	LucasArts	●●●●◖	86
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	**LucasArts**	**●●●**	**64**
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	**●●●●◖**	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	**●●●**	**55**
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●●	84
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	**Activision**	**●●●◖**	**60**
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Strike Force Bowling	Crave	●◖	82
Stuntman	**Infogrames/Atari**	**●●●**	**59**
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Suikoden IV	Konami	●●●	89
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41

SILENT BUT DEADLY

Over the years, *OPM* reviewers have given the three PS2 *Silent Hill* games the exact same score (though for different reasons each time). So you tell us: What's *your* favorite *Silent Hill*? Send your answers to opm@ziffdavis.com with the title "Silent Hill."

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Monkey Ball Deluxe	Sega	●●●	92
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Taiko: Drum Master	Namco	●●●●	87
Tak and the Power of Juju	**THQ**	●●●◖	**75**
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ	●●●◖	88
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami	●	86
Tekken 4	**Namco**	●●●◖	**61**
Tekken 5	Namco	●●●●	92
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**39**
Technic Beat	Mastiff	●●●	89
Tenchu: Fatal Shadows	Sega	●●	90
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari	●●●◖	86
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	**58**
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Test Drive: Eve of Destruction	Atari	●●●●	85
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	86
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
Time Crisis: Crisis Zone	Namco	●●●◖	86
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**91**
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	●●●●	86
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◖	65
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	**Ubisoft**	●●●◖	**78**
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	68
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**92**
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**82**
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	**Eidos**	●●	**72**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Activision	●●●●◖	87
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◖	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	**Activision**	●●	**76**
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	EA Games	●●●●	88
UEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	82
UFC Throwdown	Crave	●●●◖	58
UFC Sudden Impact	Crave	●●●◖	82
Under the Skin	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◖	40
The Urbz: Sims in the City	EA Games	●●●◖	88
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◖	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◖	52
Van Helsing	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	82
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◖	51
⚡Vietcong: Purple Haze	Global Star	●◖	88
Viewtiful Joe	Capcom	●●●●◖	85
Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom	●●●●	88
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	●●●●●	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	●●●●●	**72**
Virtua Quest	Sega	●●	89
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◖	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◖	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◖	74
Warriors of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◖	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◖	59
Way of the Samurai 2	Capcom	●●●	82
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◖	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◖	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◖	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◖	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Poker	Crave	●◖	90
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◖	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
⚡World Soccer: Winning Eleven 8 Int'l	Konami	●●●●◖	90
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
⚡World Tour Soccer 2006	Gathering	●●	91
Worms Forts: Under Siege	Sega	●●●	92
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◖	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	●●●●●	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◖	68
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	**THQ**	●●●◖	**76**
WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It	**THQ**	●●●◖	**52**
WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth	**THQ**	●●◖	**64**
⚡WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw	THQ	●●●◖	88
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◖	38
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	81
X-Men Legends	Activision	●●●●	87
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●	64
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga Episode I: DWZM	Namco	●●●●	66
Xenosaga Episode II: JVGUB	Namco	●●●◖	90
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◖	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◖	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◖	49
Ys VI: The Art of Napishtim	Konami	●●●◖	90
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◖	67
Yu-Gi-Oh! Capsule Monster Coliseum	Konami	●●●	88
Yu Yu Hakusho: Dark Tournament	Atari	●●◖	88
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◖	64
ZOE: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◖	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◖	68

READER REVIEWS

KRATOS SMASH!

GOD OF WAR

WHAT YOU SAID

"The very first level of *God of War* is where you fight this awesome Hydra. From that point on, this game only gets better! *God of War* is an amazing game with stunning graphics, a moving score, top-notch voice acting (with Oscar winner Linda Hunt), and SO much more! The combat system allows you to string together amazing combos with a few button presses. The art direction is outstanding and the enemies and boss fights are just amazing. The only thing I feel is bad about this game is that it is too short, but overall, this game was one wild ride!"

[●●●●●]

Shane Heslet

WHAT WE SAID

"People do not play games because they break new ground. People play games because they are fun. And fun is *God of War*'s greatest strength."

[●●●●●]

NBA STREET V3

WHAT YOU SAID

What you said: "This has become one of my favorite games ever. My favorite parts are the gamebreaker dunks and dunk contests. But the gamebreaker is one of the most annoying parts too—when you are about to dunk and you expect your teammates to run up while you're in the air so you can pass the ball to them, they just sit there hoping you score. The trick stick on the game is a great way to use fewer controls for special moves. The only other thing I would like to point out is the court creator because it allows you to make your own style court. It feels a lot like I'm playing *THUG2* again."

[●●●●●]

Christopher Cross

WHAT WE SAID

What we said: "Every time I set the controller down after completing an extended *NBA Street V3* session, I couldn't help but pick it right back up again."

[●●●●◖]

JAK 3

WHAT YOU SAID

What you said: "Who doesn't like driving, fighting, shooting, and flying—and better yet, there's no blood or gore. What I'm talking about is *Jak 3*. And let's face it, *Jak* is back and three times better. No matter who you are, you will like *Jak*; if you like *GTA*, you will like this; if you like platformers, you'll like this; and if you like comical games, you'll love this."

[●●●●●]

Dominique Levesque

WHAT WE SAID

"The gameplay is as varied as ever, mixing driving, shooting, hover-boarding, and flying with straight-up platforming in a most satisfying fashion."

[●●●●◖]

Got a review? Then e-mail it to opm@ziffdavis.com with a subject line of "Reader Review" and we may run it in an upcoming issue.

REWIND

OPM THROUGH THE YEARS

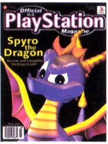
THE SAGA CONTINUES

OPM is just seven issues away from No. 100. Continuing with last month's theme, we're taking a look at Issue #12 through #22. Thrill to the odd choices of games to preview! Wonder at now-familiar franchises seen for the first time! Gaze in abject horror at the dated covers! And as a special bonus, learn a little bit about what went on behind the scenes.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Parasite Eve

ISSUE #12: SEPTEMBER 1998

Cover story: *Parasite Eve*
Reviewed: *Parasite Eve* (4/5), *Mega Man Legends* (4/5), *C: The Contra Adventure* (1.5/5)
Previewed: *Tenchu, Wild 9, NFL Blitz*
Most unreasonably optimistic quote: "Although a PlayStation version [of *Soul Calibur*] hasn't officially been announced yet, you can be sure it's in the planning stages, due to the successful translation of *Tekken 3*."


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Spyro the Dragon

ISSUE #13: OCTOBER 1998

Cover story: *Spyro the Dragon*
Reviewed: *Spyro the Dragon* (4/5), *Tales of Destiny* (4/5), *Devil Dice* (3.5/5)
Previewed: *Xenogears, Tomb Raider III*
Behind the scenes: This bland cover was originally supposed to be a beautiful, unique piece of 3D cut-paper art depicting Spyro in flight. But our editorial director at the time deemed it "too kiddie" and ditched it at the last minute.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Tomb Raider III
exposed!

ISSUE #14: NOVEMBER 1998

Cover story: *Tomb Raider III*
Reviewed: *Metal Gear Solid* (5/5), *Xenogears* (4/5), *Tenchu* (4/5)
Previewed: *Mr. Domino, Twisted Metal III*
Least prescient quote: "I'm hoping it can just be dark and chilling like the game—good zombies, good makeup, good effects." —George Romero on the *Resident Evil* movie, which he was originally slated to write and direct

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Warped Speed Ahead

ISSUE #15: DECEMBER 1998

Cover story: *Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped*
Reviewed: *Crash Bandicoot 3* (5/5), *Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus* (4.5/5), *The Fifth Element* (.5/5)
Previewed: *Syphon Filter, Silent Hill*
Best quote: "Jim the guard got a kick out of the C4 I strapped to him. We laughed and laughed. Actually, I guess I did all the laughing." —from Solid Snake: Declassified, a visual tour through *Metal Gear Solid*'s photo mode

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Gex

ISSUE #16: JANUARY 1999

Cover story: *Gex: Deep Cover Gecko*
Reviewed: *Tomb Raider III* (3.5/5), *Twisted Metal III* (2.5/5), *Apocalypse* (3/5)
Previewed: *Soul Reaver, Irritating Stick*
Biggest brouhaha over nothing: We spoofed Janet Jackson's famous *Rolling Stone* cover with Gex's hands covering the breasts of costar (and *Baywatch* babe) Marliece Andrada. You would not believe the letters we got.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
R4

ISSUE #17: FEBRUARY 1999

Cover story: *R4: Ridge Racer Type 4*
Reviewed: *R-Types* (3.5/5), *WCW/nWo Thunder* (1/5), *Contender* (4/5)
Previewed: *Street Sk8er, Clock Tower II, Need for Speed: High Stakes*
Coolest fanboy moment: David Hayter records an acceptance speech for *Metal Gear Solid*'s sweep of our 1998 Editors' Awards—*as Solid Snake*. "Thanks, *OPM*. You guys rock." Yes!

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Silent Hill

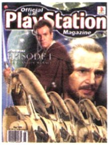
ISSUE #18: MARCH 1999

Cover story: *Silent Hill*
Reviewed: *Silent Hill* (4/5), *Syphon Filter* (4/5)
Previewed: *Legend of Legaia, Alien Resurrection, Elmo's Letter Adventure*
Most embarrassing moment: After shipping *Tiger Woods PGA Tour '99*, EA learns that someone snuck a video of the incredibly offensive *South Park* prequel "The Spirit of Christmas" onto the disc. Parents are not amused.

PLAYSTATION 2 BREAKING NEWS!
Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
The Year of the Role Playing Game
13 New RPGs

ISSUE #19: APRIL 1999

Cover story: Year of the Role-playing Game
Reviewed: *Legend of Legaia* (4/5), *Street Sk8er* (2.5/5), *Rollcage* (3.5/5)
Previewed: *Final Fantasy VIII, Gran Turismo 2, Driver, Point Blank 2*
Biggest waste of space: Three pages on the PocketStation, the memory card–sized, monochromatic game peripheral that Sony swore would one day come out in the States. It didn't.


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Episode I

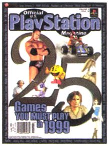
ISSUE #20: MAY 1999

Cover story: *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*
Reviewed: *Ridge Racer Type 4* (4/5), *Need for Speed: High Stakes* (4.5/5), *Army Men 3D* (3/5)
Previewed: *Wipeout 3, Ape Escape*
Most misleading quote: "How many do you want?" —Ken Kutaragi, "Father of the PlayStation," when asked how many controller ports the PS2 would have. So of course everyone assumed the answer was *four*.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Resident Evil 3 Nemesis
40 New Games

ISSUE #21: JUNE 1999

Cover story: *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*
Reviewed: *Street Fighter Alpha 3* (5/5), *Ehrgeiz* (3.5/5), *Bloody Roar 2* (4/5)
Previewed: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, Ape Escape*
Most surreal quote: "Jill runs and runs from the Tyrant, until she finally realizes what is really causing her to run is her fear of love. She and the Tyrant get married and honeymoon while Raccoon City burns to the ground."


Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
25 Games You Must Play in 1999

ISSUE #22: JULY 1999

Cover story: 25 Games You Must Play in 1999
Reviewed: *Star Ocean: The 2nd Story* (4.5/5), *Ape Escape* (5/5), *GTA: London 1969* (2.5/5)
Previewed: *Crash Team Racing, Quake II, Fear Effect, Echo Night*
Oddest story idea: "ePlay"—we put a bunch of videogame tchotchkes on eBay and document how much they sell for. The big winner: a *Mega Man* promotional standee, at $16.25.

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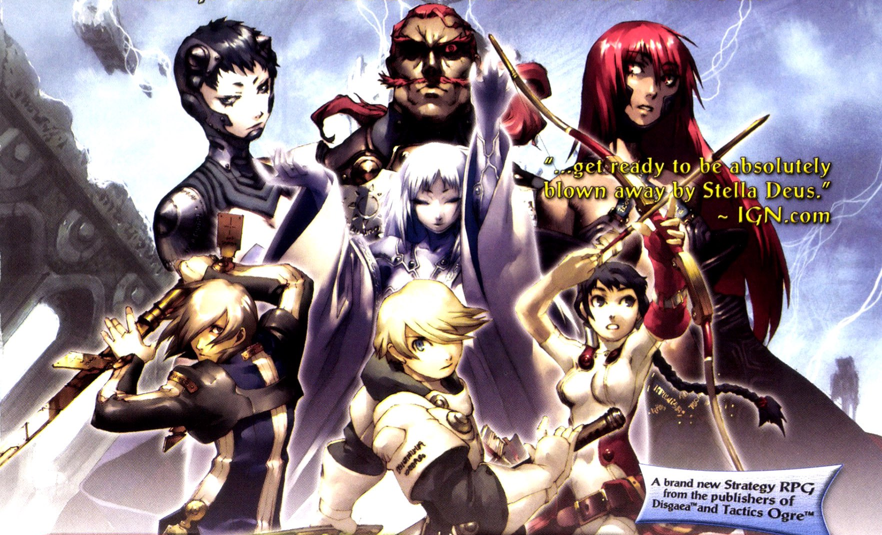
WHAT LIES BEYOND THIS EARTHLY EXISTENCE? THE GATE OF ETERNITY AWAITS YOU...



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A brand new Strategy RPG from the publishers of Disgaea™ and Tactics Ogre™

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Back
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Mp 128/128
Linea

Over 50 hours of tactical gameplay featuring sidequests and the Catacombs of Trial!

Customize your inventory by fusing and creating items!

I want to protect this village.
I'm not letting someone like
him ruin it.

Hi-Res hand-drawn graphics bring the world of Stella Deus to life!

Move
Attack
Skill
Item
Finish
Free
Lv 3 Exp21
Hp 151/151
Mp 62/62

Work together to launch devastating team attacks with other characters!

STELLA DEUS™

THE GATE OF ETERNITY

THE GATE OPENS SPRING 2005

TEEN
T
Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation®2

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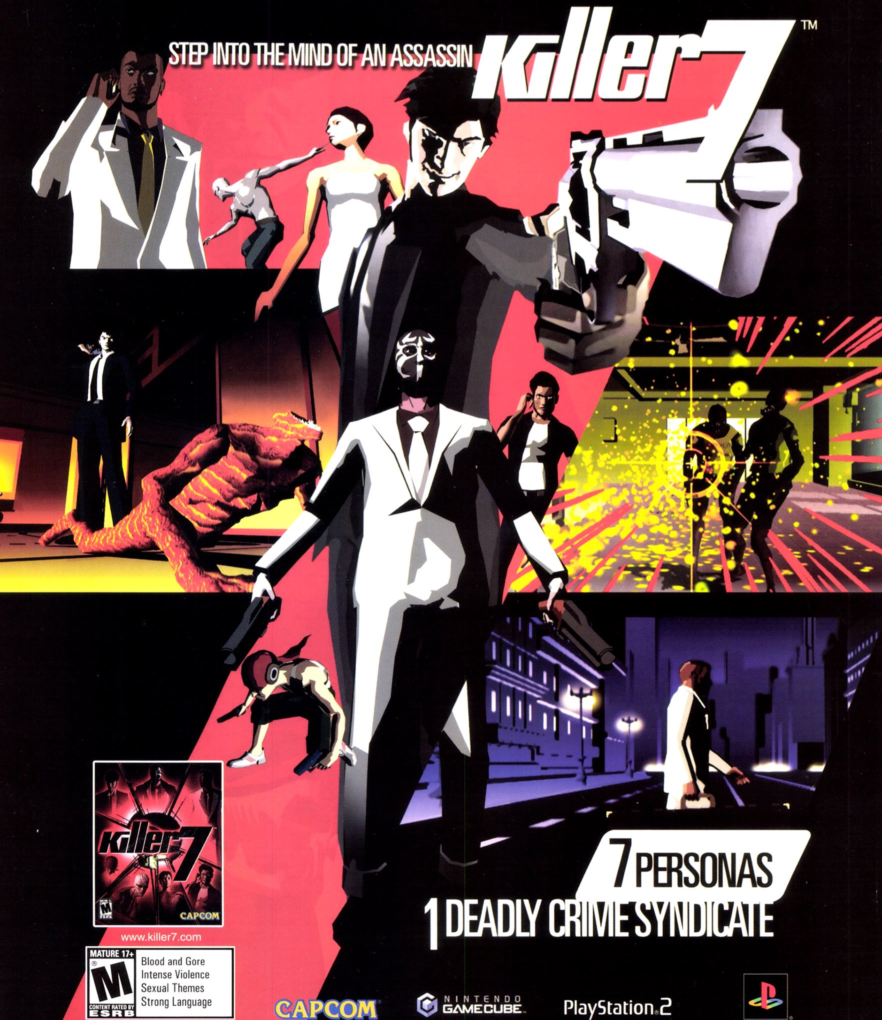
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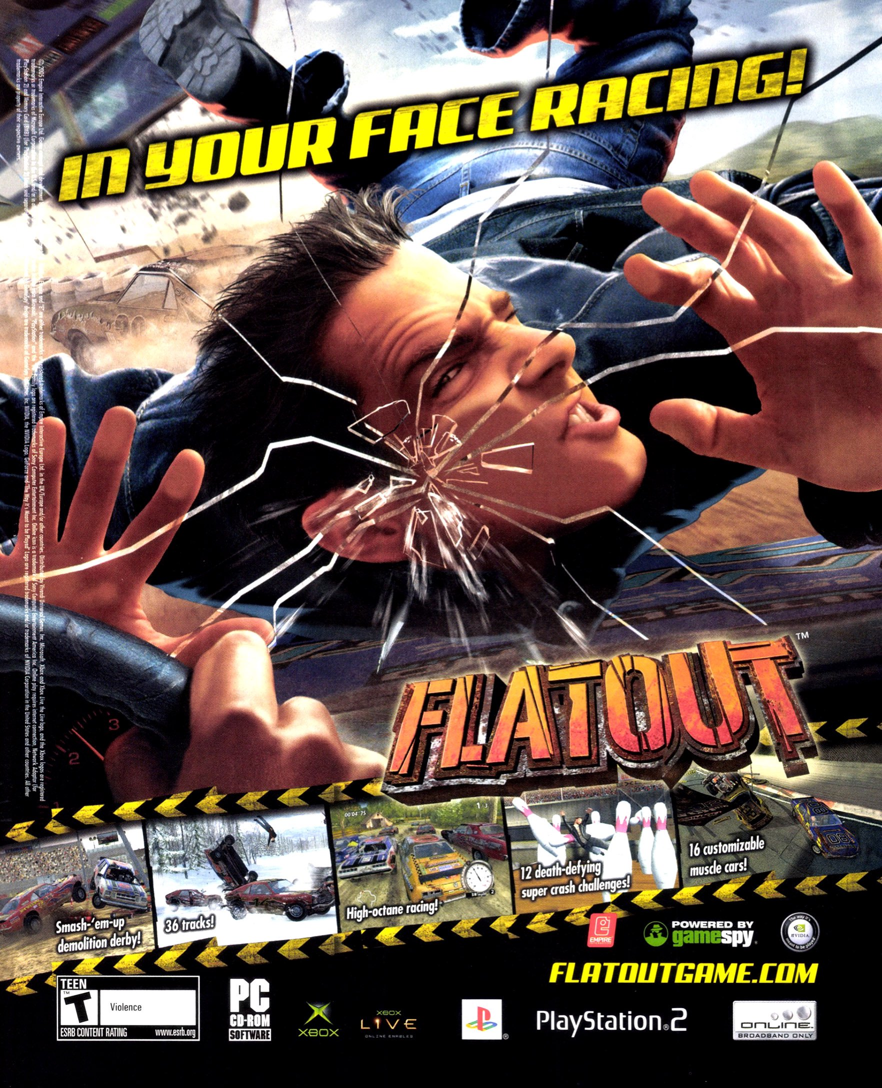
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ON THE DVD

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

It's summer, and you know what that means: lots of demos of fairly low-profile games that may or may not turn out to be any good. This month, we got lucky with the surprisingly entertaining *Stolen* and *Lego Star Wars*.

WATCH AND PLAY

ALSO CHECK OUT

An in-depth feature on the PSP, complete with some nice footage of *Hot Shots Golf* and an interview.

PlayStation 2
DELTA FORCE
BLACK HAWK DOWN

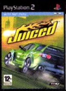
DELTA FORCE: BHD

How's this for motivation: The slightest screwup sends you back to the Main menu screen. Ouch. The game looks surprisingly sharp, though.

PlayStation 2
EA SPORTS
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

Want to play a boxing game that's almost painfully realistic? Want to hear a blow-by-blow commentary on facial deformation? You've got it.



JUICED

It's drift-heavy street racing in an over-the-top, cartoony style. Bet big on your race and see your respect increase with your peers. If only it were that easy.

PlayStation 2
LEGO STAR WARS
THE VIDEO GAME

LEGO STAR WARS

If seeing scenes from *Episode I* reenacted with Legos doesn't make you giggle, then you have no soul. YOU HAVE NO SOUL. Have fun destroying everything.

PlayStation 2
MADAGASCAR

MADAGASCAR

A 3D platformer based on an animated movie? What on earth will they think of next? Switch between three mammalian characters and go for broke.

PlayStation 2
STAR WARS
BATTLEFRONT

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

In honor of the *Battlefront II* announcement and the premier of *Episode III*, we figured we'd give you another taste of this Force-tastic shooter.

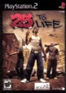
UNLOCK THIS

We've got downloads to unlock all levels in *Second Sight* and everything in *BloodRayne 2*.

PlayStation 2
STOLEN

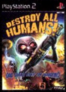
STOLEN

You might as well call *Stolen*'s heroine Anya "Samantha Fisher." She's got the moves, certainly (though those guards sure don't).



25 TO LIFE

This is video only, but it should give you a sense of the kind of over-the-top cops-and-robbers thing the *25 to Life* developers are going for.



DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

A great trailer for a very promising game. Ubiquitous developer Pandemic appears to be developing a mix of *GTA*, *Psi-Ops*, and *Mars Attacks!*

PlayStation 2
GUNDAM
GUNDAM VS. ZETA GUNDAM

GUNDAM VS. ZETA

It's GIANT ROBOTS FIGHTING WITH SWORDS AND GUNS IN SPACE. Really, what more do you *Gundam* fans need to know?

PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM

Demo Disc Producers
Gary Barth, Manuel Sousa, Jerome Strach, Chris Tan
Marketing Team
Steve Williams, Jesse Caid, Eric Lempel
Executive Producer
Andrew House
Format Q&A
Sam Bradley, Edward Toomy
Q&A Account Coordinator
Eric Ippolito

Programming and interface artwork by
Lifelike Productions, Inc.
Lead Programmers
William Bohan, Ron Midthun, Avery Lodato
3D Artists Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes
Producer Jessi Harrison
President Katherine Williams
Technical Director Tim Edwards

SPECIAL THANKS

Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Christine DeNezza, Tom Gillan, Cori Lucas, Gerald Martin, Sean Thomas, Jim Williams

DISC PROBLEMS?

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to OPM Disc Producer, Ziff Davis Media, 101 2nd Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

If you have a malfunctioning or nonworking demo disc, call EDS at 1-800-627-6458. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services.

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- YAHOO! GAMES

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4 PSP HANDHELD EXCLUSIVES

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WIRELESS MULTIPLAYER

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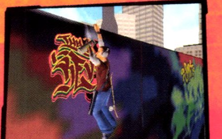
ProSkater
ProSkater
ProSkater
ProSkater
971 X 3
Pop Shove-It + Manual + Pogo



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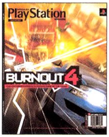
INPUT

HIT US WITH YOUR BEST SHOT



LETTER OF THE MONTH

I'm the assistant manager of a videogame store. One time, I had a customer come in with a [busted] PS2 that he bought in May 2004. He had also purchased the product replacement plan, so, of course, we are obligated to replace the unit with another used one. I had a traded-in PS2 sitting in the back, but the expansion bay cover wasn't on it because it once had a Network Adaptor attached to it. Well, being the stickler for completeness that I am, I grabbed another unit and removed the expansion bay cover to put on the replacement unit. As I removed the cover, I noticed a rather odd sight. It looked as if something was inside the expansion bay. I should never have looked.... Upon further examination, my jaw immediately dropped, and I walked to the door that led back onto the sales floor. I called one of my associates over and asked him if he had a moment. I so wanted to be seeing things. He came into the back, and I looked at him with a dumbstruck look on my face and asked him if I was really seeing what I thought I was seeing in the expansion bay. His eyes widened, a huge grin broke out on his face, and he started laughing. He then proceeded to remove the...items of discretion. Lo and behold, what was stashed in the PS2? You won't believe this, but there were 11 (yes, we counted) Trojan condoms. They were still inside their wrappers, of course, but still.... Nice ones, too. They were tucked away, probably wondering if they were ever going to see the light of day again. After several minutes of uncontrolled laughter on both our parts, I contacted a few of my fellow management team members and warned them of the dangers of videogaming. I also let my district manager know of the touchy situation. So, if you ever have an issue with your PS2, make sure you are properly protected against Videogame Disease. It could mean the difference between winky happiness and winky wilting. It was too funny; I thought I would share.

Emerald
via e-mail

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San Francisco, CA 94105

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OPSPM2WTF?!

So I just bought my PSP and I'm completely in love with it. The variety of games offered at launch completely puts the DS' [launch lineup] to shame. (Let's face it, Nintendo has a very disappointing game selection for the DS unless you're a sports fan.) What I'm wondering is, are we gonna see *OPM* branch off into two magazines now (*OPSPM*...think about it!). If other people are like me, they're gonna want demo discs for the PSP just like how you guys offer one for the PS2. If *OPM* doesn't do this but still plans on reviewing PSP games, is there gonna be less space to cover all the games coming out for PS2 (or perhaps *OPM* will just become a lot thicker to keep up with all these new games)? With the launch of the PSP and the upcoming launch of the PS3, 2005 seems to be a year of revolutionary change in the game industry, so I guess now I'm waiting to see how *OPM* adapts.

SpcMatt97
via e-mail

Well, remember, we are the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine*. That means we cover all things PlayStation, and hence we'll make room for our new friend the PlayStation Portable. The transition will be similar to the one we went through when the PS2 launched, when we

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARDS

GOD OF KILLOLOGY

Dana loved it, and now so do a bunch of the zany message board kids. There was a humongoid thread about *GOW*, and here're some snippets:

edgerunner glowingly states, "It's definitely a more mature title, with tons of blood and gratuitous nudity, but it's all in the context of the game. As for the (anti-?) hero Kratos, let's just say he makes Solid Snake look like he should be appearing on the Lifetime network. It has elements of *Prince of Persia* and the first *Tomb Raider*. It will definitely be a contender for Game of the Year (at least in my opinion)."

ohJTbehaave goes for a more visceral and slightly masked profanity effect by saying, "It's after playing a hot triple-A-quality game like this that you come to realize that close to 70 percent of the games that are released are pretty much total s***."

oralb808 decides to keep it real by adding some antilove, saying, "With regard to the graphics...I dunno. Perhaps I'm jaded (a little more so since I'm just coming off *RE4*), but the graphics are nice...but not really impressive or awe-inspiring. I mean, it all looks nice and shiny and all that, but for me, it just seems to be missing something: more power! These graphics might be maxing out the PS2, but again, I'm finding it hard to be wowed by them. Oh well."

DISAPPOINTMENTS

On a seemingly random whim, **theonetruemayhem** decides to air his biggest disappointment of 2004 and encourages others to add theirs. He writes, "*Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*. After beating the first three PS *SF* games, I was anticipating next-generation combat with awesome graphics. Instead, what we got was awful at best."

"I'll say Sony's online [play]. After *SOCOM II*, which came out in November 2003, Sony didn't really give us much compelling reason to take the console online, save for *FFXI*, although I don't think that appealed to a large number of PS2-owning people," muses **c_strife97**.

LuminousAether decides to air his unpopular and contrarian viewpoint: "*Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal*. It was a boring, derivative rehash with nothing new and a tacked-on and horrifically implemented online mode. I'm sorry I paid money for it; it wasn't worth it."

CrispyChicken decided to address the now-broken Bond legacy, saying, "*GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*. I bet the developers forgot they were making a sequel to one of the legendary FPSes of our time."

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bust blocks, **groove** through puzzles and

jam **wirelessly** against friends

stack 'em right and you'll unlock

lush levels and **buttery beats**

want to be lumines?

"The game many are already calling the best game for PSP."
–IGN

"The best game for PSP"
4 out of 4 stars
–USA TODAY

LUMINES

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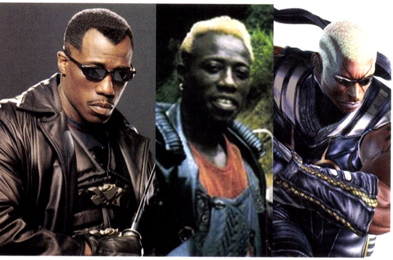

started giving room to PS2 games as the PS1 ran its course. As for a demo disc, we're looking into our options, so worry not—we'll figure something out. Again, remember that it took us a bit of time to transition from PS1 discs to PS2 discs, so don't think we can push an "OMG-PSPDISCPLZ!" button and start doing them with the next issue. Just enjoy the ride.

DANA LIKES THE LADIES?!?

I find it a bit strange that Dana Jongewaard has been reviewing games for a male-oriented audience (*The Guy Game, Playboy: The Mansion*) when there are plenty of male editors to review them. Is Dana a lesbian? If not, why has she been reviewing those types of games?

Derek Neumeir
via e-mail

We're not sure about Dana's orientation, so you'll have to remind us to query "DANA = lesbian?!?" next time we see her husband, Brian. But in general, we're just a bunch of immature cads who like to inflict some measure of suffering onto others. In other news, this is a good opportunity for us to randomly display a picture of a bunch of chicks cuddling. Thanks, buddy!

TEKKEN FIVE STARRING...

I was flipping through Issue #91 and saw the advertisement for *Tekken 5*. It wasn't the game that caught my eye but the new character pictured on the top right. (I looked it up, and he's named Raven.) The funny thing is, he looks exactly like Simon Phoenix, the villain of the movie *Demolition Man* with Sylvester Stallone. His face and hair are dead-on, and his clothes are pretty close as well. On top of that, they're both named after birds. Just thought I'd bring this to light since I got quite a kick out of it.

Ben Daniels
via e-mail

It seems as though someone on *Tekken*'s development team is a fan of Wesley Snipes, as Raven not only looks like Simon Phoenix, but also looks and acts like Blade! Do you think Shinichiro Yoda (a Namco character designer) sits around quoting awesome lines like "Always bet on black" or "Some motherf***er's always trying to skate uphill"?

BURGLED!

I have owned a PlayStation 2 and 15 to 20 games for years. At least I did until March 15, when, on the drive home from work, my 9-year-old son called me and said, "Mom, you have been robbed, and the only thing taken was your PlayStation 2 and some games."

When I arrived home to check this out, I discovered that they had had enough time to pull all the wires from behind my television stand, go through my games, and grab my memory cards. They left my son's GameCube on the floor after removing it from on top of my PS2.

Tara Henderson
via e-mail

Hopefully, you've made some sort of recovery from this ghastly act of burglary. The only consolation we see (being editors on a PS2 magazine) is the odd twist that they left the beloved GameCube behind, especially considering the fact that they had to move it to get to the PS2 yet still elected to leave it behind rather than stuff it down their trousers. They really wanted that PS2.

MAKING CLINT'S DAY

If I could have any movie made into a game, it would be the 1982 Clint Eastwood movie *Firefox*, which was made by Warner Bros. and is based on the Craig Thomas novel of the same name. After all, it has the potential to be a pretty good combat flight sim if the right company were to do it, such as Namco. It would be interesting to be piloting the Mach 6 Soviet stealth superweapon while wreaking hypersonic havoc over the former Soviet Union by way of Siberia.

Jonathan Montalvo
via e-mail

As avid worshippers of awesome '80s movies that display gratuitous use of machismo tied to explosive firepower, we fully endorse the idea of a game based on the *Firefox* license. Who knows, maybe we can have a game crossover with *Airwolf*! «

CORRECTION

The dashing Liz Buckley doesn't draw her checks from Vivendi Universal as we claimed last month; she is actually a product manager at Majesco. Please forgive us over a bottle of vino, Liz!

ASK US ANYTHING

AND WE'LL ANSWER

A LOBBY OF DREAMS

Q In your April issue (#91), you have a picture on page 22 of an office building lobby. Could you tell me what and where that lobby is?

Brian Jamison
vie e-mail

A That's the lobby of EA's Redwood Shores campus. You can see the kiosks filled with EA love and magic on the right-hand side.

PSP RAINBOW

Q I finally got my beloved PSP on March 24 at 6 p.m. I turn it on, and what is the first thing I notice? A green startup screen! I check the box; it shows a blue screen. I check the Web for a picture of the PSP: blue screen. I happen to see the TV ad...what do you know? Blue. Did I do something to the PSP?

Bryan Westall
via email

A Nope, it's not you; it's the PSP displaying its vast awareness of time and space. Well, just time, as it changes color every month, and March was green.

OH NOMAD, WE MISS YOU

Q Hi, I need to find out how long the PSP's battery will last and if you bump the PSP, will its laser screw up and then you will have to fix it? My friend Matthew is telling everyone that the battery only lasts for 30 minutes and that if you bump [the system] hard enough, the laser will screw up. Please prove him wrong.

Chris Jenkins
via e-mail

A Your friend Matthew is the most extravagant of charlatans. While the PSP's battery life depends on what the device is doing (games that spin the disc constantly eat up more PSP juice than games that load sparingly), it won't be as pathetic as half an hour. Those days are long gone. Next time Matt says that the PSP's battery lasts for half an hour, just say "Battery jokes are so 1995!" and slap him or something. As for your other point, we don't think bumping it will screw up the laser, although you still shouldn't hit your PSP.

1UP.com™

BLOG OF THE MONTH

"For example, if I gave an iPod to my son as a present, he would have a digital record of all the music he has ever enjoyed. It would reflect his personality. And now in Japan, when high-school students check out the playlists of their classmates, they are able to gauge that person's tastes. This is what I've realized—it's a way of self-expression.

About five or six years ago in Japan, all of a sudden, chewing gum lost its popularity. The gum manufactures were wondering why, so they began taking surveys. One cause that they found was that cell phones were taking the place of chewing gum by monopolizing people's mouths. So when people are bored at the station or wherever, they gradually have been using cell phones more and more and thus have cut back on their idle gum chewing."

Tetsuya Mizuguchi
mizuguchi.1UP.com

CLUB OF THE MONTH

"This is for ALL of the fans of *Lumines* for the PSP. If you own or love it, you must join. Make this club the best *Lumines* club out there."

The Lumines Fan Club
luminesfanclub-club.1UP.com

The next big thing in entertainment is surprisingly small.

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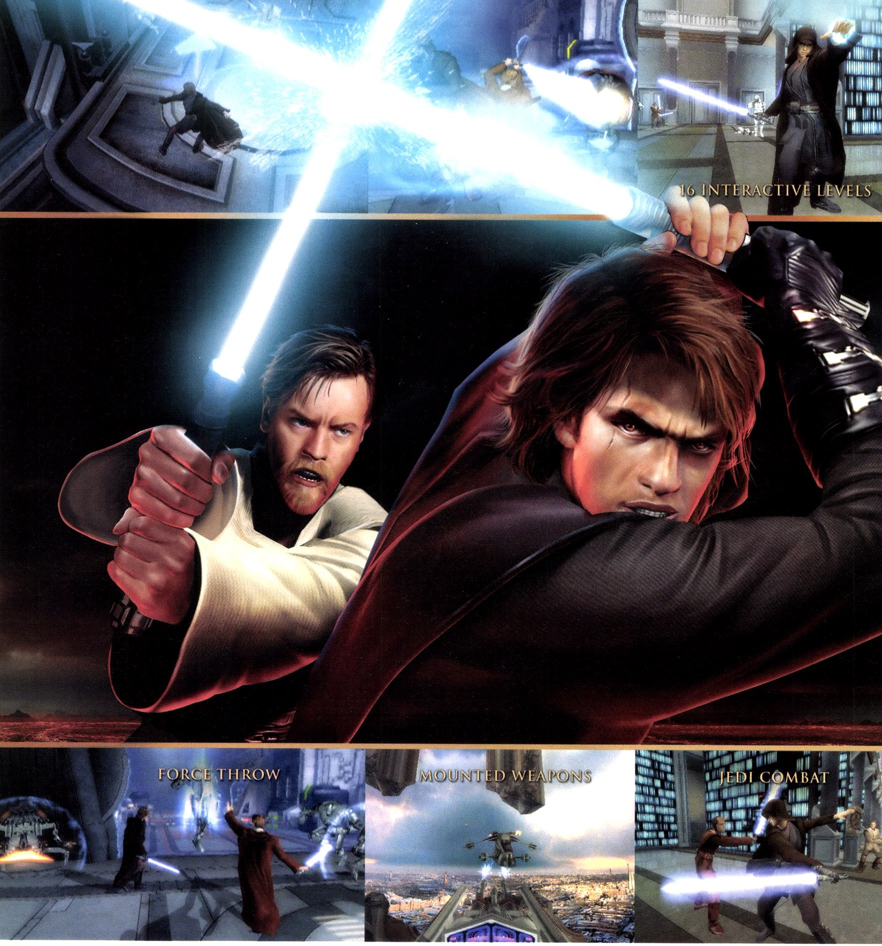
16 INTERACTIVE LEVELS
FORCE THROW
MOUNTED WEAPONS
JEDI COMBAT

XBOX

PlayStation 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE

NINTENDO DS

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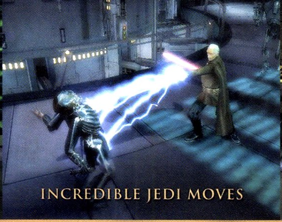
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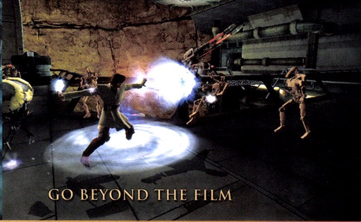
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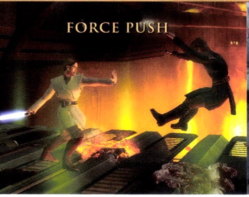
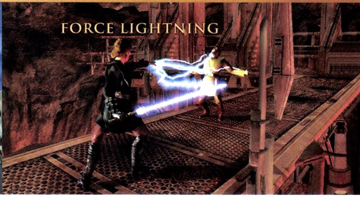


MULTI-ENEMY BATTLES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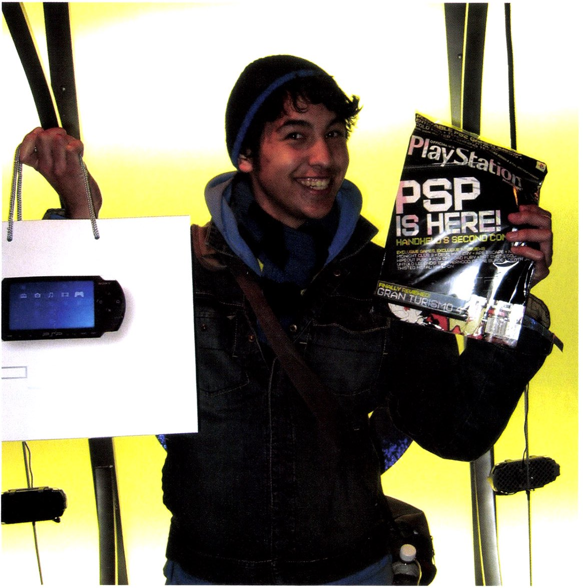
PlayStation
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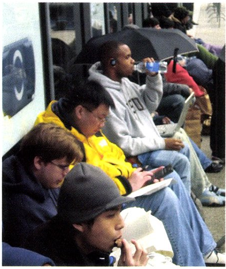

HYPE

34>

GETTING UP

MARC ECKO BRINGS HIS FLAVOR OF URBAN TO PLAYSTATION

INSIDE

28 **BURNOUT LEGENDS**
The power of *Burnout* in the palm of your hand.
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The trilogy is over, but the franchise continues.
40 **SMELLS LIKE GTA**
The newest crop of gangster games is coming your way.
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Welcome to online gaming—you suck.
48 **BUILDING CHARACTER**
Kojima, Price, Inafune, and more on how to create characters that matter.
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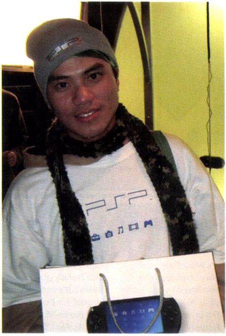
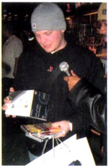
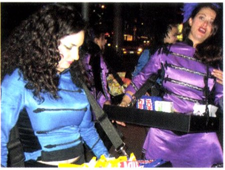
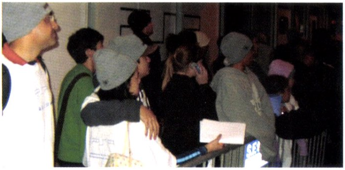




THE FIRST
Richard, pictured above, was the first person to purchase his PSP at the Sony store in San Francisco's Metreon. Though tired from his long wait, Richard still had enough energy to let us know that he was "very happy."





PSP LAUNCH

CRACK OPEN THE CHAMPAGNE—IT'S FINALLY HERE

By March 23, 2005, excitement over the PSP's North American launch the next day had reached a fever pitch. Finally, gamers across the continent would be getting their Gollum-like hands on their precious new toy.

The Sony CEA executives were out in full force, granting interviews to journalists across the country, though they weren't all on the same page. Jack Tretton, the executive vice president at Sony CEA, said, "In terms of us trying to introduce applications to consumers, we're really focusing on it being a gaming device for launch period. We're not saying, 'Hey, before you buy that iPod, come over here and check out the PSP!'"

That same day, Sony CEA president Kaz Hirai said, "If someone told you that the PSP is a portable gaming device, shoot those people. The PSP is not a portable gaming device, it is really a convergent portable entertainment device."

As far as we're aware, Mr. Tretton is still alive and well, but Sony's mixed message represents the confusion that consumers may be feeling about the PSP. While it's a sure magnet for gamers, technology publications and websites have been less gung ho about its overall capabilities; a not atypical headline was *Forbes*' "Great for Games, Not Much Else."

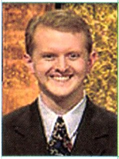
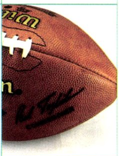
None of that hesitancy was in evidence by the evening of March 23, however. Dedicated and hardy souls started lining up at the Sony Metreon in San Francisco extra early to ensure they would be one of the first to get a PSP; in fact, the first person in line got there at 8 a.m. on March 22, waiting it out for 40 hours through rain and wind.

Official festivities began at 7 p.m. Girls in usherette outfits handed out free snacks and drinks, bouncers in headsets kept the line in order, and a huge PSP hanging on the building opposite the Metreon ran game footage as a gigantic timer counted down the seconds until midnight. Those further back in the line would have to wait a bit longer than that, however; cashiers were busy checking out new owners past 4 a.m. Turns out those people probably could have gotten a little extra shut-eye—while sales were brisk, only 500,000 of the 1 million units shipped for launch day were sold immediately. But what are a few hours of sleep compared to the distinction of being one of the first PSP owners? «

A HUGE PSP HANGING ON THE BUILDING RAN GAME FOOTAGE.

MAY 2K5

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
01 It's **May Day**, when you celebrate the coming of spring and your mighty fertility! Go crazy with the flowers and the seeds and all that! Just don't overdo it.	02 Can you smell what **The Rock**'s got cookin' today? It's birthday strudel for both him and **Baron Manfred von Richthofen**! Then they'll hop into the Red Baron's biplane and chase down Snoopy.		04 If you like to go "vroom vroom," then you can drive to the store to pick up a game about driving to places that aren't the store, ***Enthusia***, and also the ***Star Wars Ep III*** game. **[NEW GAMES]**		06 You can watch either ***House of Wax***, which has the saucy Elisha Cuthbert and a less-naked Paris Hilton, or Ridley Scott's ***Kingdom of Heaven***, where Legolas goes out to fight dudes in Jerusalem.	
08 Tell your mom that you really do care, because it's **Mother's Day** after all. Otherwise, she'll do something mean like let your little brother use your copy of *God of War* as a substitute diaper or somesuch.	09	10 It's Bono's birthday today, and we bet you forgot all about it. Don't fret; you can say, "My gift's in the jet," then run off to snag him either ***Cold Winter*** or ***Haunting Ground***. **[NEW GAMES]**		12 Hey, you've been invited to a massive birthday bash for lucky dudes **Tony Hawk**, **Emilio Estevez**, **Stephen Baldwin**, **Ving Rhames**, and **George Carlin**! It's at the Applebee's at 7:30.	13 If you're wondering why ads for ***Mindhunters*** looks so familiar, it's because it was supposed to come out in January of last year. Go see Jet Li learn love and love violence in ***Unleashed*** instead.	
15 Oh man, nine cats scattered around the homes of the *OPM* staff are going to enjoy today, since it's **Hug Your Cat Day**. If you lack a furry feline, the crazy cat lady down the street can help.	16 At its 3 p.m. PST press conference, Sony will finally release info about the much-anticipated **PlayStation 3**. Want details? Then check www.1UP.com for the dirt.	17 Cash monies demand to be spent, so spend them fast by picking up ***Metal Slug 4 & 5***, ***Motocross Mania 3***, ***Outlaw Volleyball Remix***, and ***Outlaw Tennis*** today. **[NEW GAMES]**	18 Today marks the first of the three glorious videogame-filled days that are otherwise known as E3. Go visit www.1UP.com for news and pictures so up-to-date that it's almost like being there.	19 This is the biggie, the one that shows both the creation of Darth Vader and a deliciously pregnant Natalie Portman. You say you'll hate it, but you know you'll love ***Star Wars Episode III***.	20	21 Today is **National Waitress and Waiters Day**, so be sure to tip them generously while enjoying the veal. Otherwise, they might slather it in odd bodily fluids without telling you, and that is icky.
	23 Oh **KenJen**, you magnificent *Jeopardy*-winning fellow, how we envy you and your *Jeopardy* earnings! Perhaps you can take **Jewel** for a birthday-for-two meal, and she'll write a poem.	24 Buy CG-animal-movie-based game ***Madagascar*** or zany Japanese RPG ***Atelier Iris: Eternal Mana***. Too bad there's no zany Japanese CG animal RPG combo pack. **[NEW GAMES]**	25 Gandalf and Magneto share the same birthday—zany! Actually, it's just **Ian McKellen**'s birthday. But we assume he still takes B-day cards addressed to either Gandalf the Grey or Magneto.		27 You already heard about zany CG animal movie ***Madagascar***, but have you heard about the remake for ***The Longest Yard***? It's about prison football, hut-hut!	
	30 **Memorial Day** is a pretty important holiday that memorializes our honored dead who've fallen in duty. If your school doesn't recognize this day, maybe your principal hates freedom.	31 On this loneliest of days, when the spring fever of May comes to an end, there is but one light in the gloom: the release of ***Digimon World 4***. **[NEW GAMES]**				

Get more action this weekend.

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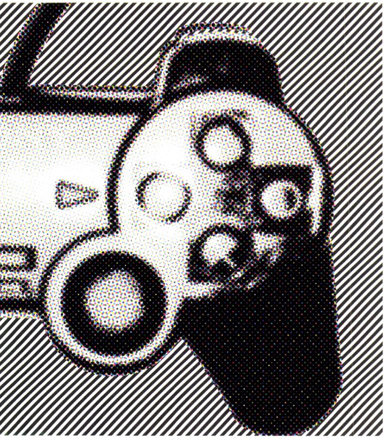


DUALSHOCKED

COURT ORDERS SONY TO FORK OVER $90 MILLION

A United States district court for Northern California has ordered Sony to pay $90.7 million to Immersion for patent infringement involving technology inside the DualShock controller. Immersion alleges that the rumble technology used in the DualShock closely resembles the technology Immersion designed for use in such devices. The original amount Sony was asked to pay totaled $82 million, but the court awarded an additional $8.7 million to Immersion for prejudgment interest.

More importantly, the court also issued a preliminary injunction against Sony that prevents the company from selling the PS1, PS2, and 47 games that were deemed to directly infringe on the copyright. Does this mean you can't go out and buy a PS2? Fortunately, no—the injunction won't actually take effect until after appeal proceedings in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit; however, Sony will still have to pay a royalty fee to Immersion during that period. The company is also asking the court to require Sony to pay the damages during the appeals period.

"The compulsory license during the stay of the injunction creates a binding obligation for Sony to compensate us for the continued use of our technology in their PlayStation products," said Victor Viegas, CEO of Immersion. "We have always believed, and continue to believe, in the strength of our intellectual property. We remain confident of our position in the appeals process."

Microsoft fell victim to a similar lawsuit in 2002, but the company opted to settle out of court rather than engage in a drawn-out legal battle. Microsoft paid $26 million for licensing rights of Immersion's technology, which the Xbox and a variety of other Microsoft products currently use. «

ZOE FLOWER

THE ULTIMATE ONE-NIGHT STAND

ZOE FLOWER is a fervent gamer with a self-diagnosed case of adult-onset attention deficit disorder. She…umm…hey! Is that a chocolate cupcake? I love chocolate. Has anyone seen my shoes? You can try to get Zoe's attention at zoeflower.1UP.com.

It's 2 a.m. For the past three hours I have been wincing each time I glance toward the clock, feeding myself a line that I know all too well to be a complete fabrication—"Just five more minutes and then I'll go to bed." I know we've all been there, incapable of stopping for such trivialities as sleep! And as I enter into the final boss battle of *God of War*, the desire to beat the game creates an exponential increase in my ability to fight off the darkness creeping down my eyelids. This game conjures up the pure absorbing glee that I felt as a young girl in the arcade (ah yes, those sweet childhood days of unapologetic murder and destruction!). But the end is very near and I am consumed with a knowing dread.

I have a confession. Whenever I get to a final battle—no matter the game—I become an utter and complete newbie gaming *spaz*. Time and time again, whether I'm taking out the Boss in *Snake Eater* (deep down I didn't want to kill her anyway) or contemplating the intimidating scale of Ares, the god of war, I am reduced to a non-DualShock-induced body-shaking, arm-flailing, palm-sweating, teenage-girl-squealing disaster! How is it that a videogame can create such an adrenaline-inspired reaction?

My patience wears thin as I am squished like a bug over and over—and insult gets added to injury as the game offers to switch to easy mode. I am inflicting such force on my controller that I fear I shall break the L3 stick clean off. I try muting the audio to help take away some of the situational stress. Yet I still fail. I yell at the game, knowing I am really just frustrated by my own ineptitude.

I limp forlornly away from the game to prepare myself for some much-needed sleep, brushing my teeth and trying not to think about how my bloodshot eyes will look when I get up in five hours without the bragging rights of beating the game to comfort me. And as I reach to turn off the light, I realize the PS2 is still whirring away—calling to me. As I stand like the statue of Athena (except in fuzzy pajamas instead of see-through robes), the controller somehow gravitates to the relaxed hands of someone with nothing to lose—and who obviously doesn't give up despite her better judgment. But then, without a single twitch, I deal a series of swift blows to my opponent. It is over. I have won. I am a god. No sweat.

I congratulate myself on my deft skill (i.e., lots of silent jumping and lunging and punching of air) in the hopes of erasing the previous stint of utter incompetence. Whether it was the false courage generated by an upright playing position (less blood rushing to my head?) or the much-needed bathroom break, I feel a new hope that I might have overcome my spastic handicap. Of course, the only sure way I can prove it will be to survive the masochistic god mode without giving myself a stroke.

I might be standing in my living room for a long time. «

WHEN I GET TO A FINAL BATTLE, I BECOME A NEWBIE GAMING SPAZ.

DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA

The Critics Are Going Saga over Digital Devil Saga

"With top-notch visuals, a promising score, a unique storyline and complex play system, Digital Devil Saga: Avatar Tuner is definitely the RPG to sink your teeth into..." — RPGFan.com

"It's evil. It's cool. And it's a @#$% good game!" — Animerica

"It's still the genre you know and love, but few games have this level of polish and originality." — G4TV.com

Newtype USA GAME OF THE MONTH

"Digital Devil Saga is certainly one of the best RPGs in a long time." — SiliconEra

"The combination of slick graphics, bizarre story, and transforming abilities should make this an RPG to remember." — PSM

"A deep, mature, and original plot, beautiful cel-shaded textures and plenty of hidden extras ... make Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga one of the greatest role-playing experiences on the PlayStation2 to date." — PSX Nation

"A cutting edge, modern RPG. . . DDS is a great Final Fantasy alternative." — EGM

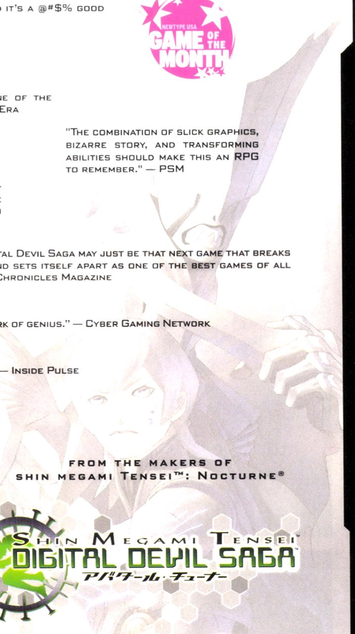
"Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga may just be that next game that breaks the mold of its genre, and sets itself apart as one of the best games of all time." — 10/10 — Game Chronicles Magazine

"Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga ... is a work of genius." — Cyber Gaming Network

"Hands down the best RPG on this generation of consoles." — Inside Pulse

"A darker RPG for an older generation of gamers." — GamePro

"RPGs don't come a whole lot more Japanese than Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga. From its title to the art and story, everything we've seen about DDS falls right into line with the tone of heavyweights like Final Fantasy, Xenosaga, and Dragon Warrior . . . Fans of any of those noble franchises will no doubt find a lot to look forward to in DDS." — Game Informer



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DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA
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- Full color 40-page manual
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Intense Violence
Language
Sexual Themes
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PlayStation®2

RPG

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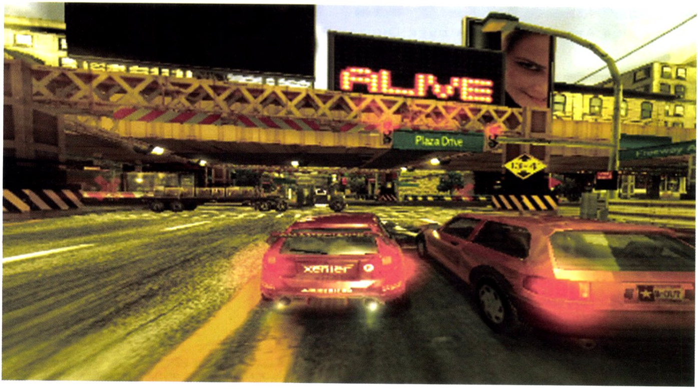
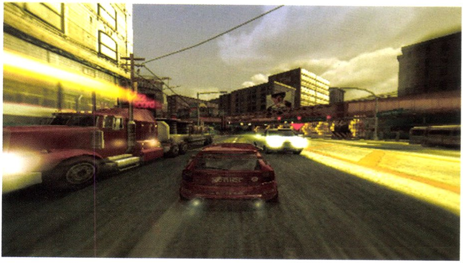
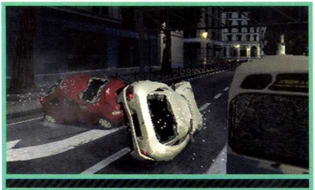

ALIVE
Plaza Drive
xenier



BURNOUT LEGENDS

WHERE RECKLESS IS BETTER THAN WRECKLESS



HEY, GOOD-LOOKIN'...

We were impressed when we saw how awesome *Burnout Legends* looks on PSP, but we were even more impressed when we went back and compared it to the first *Burnout* (pictured above), which was a first-gen PS2 game. Damn.

Crashing cars into buses while sitting on your couch at home is pretty freakin' awesome. But even more awesome is the prospect of driving crazily while actually on the road. Soon we'll have the chance to do that very thing: The *Burnout* franchise is coming to PSP.

Rather than porting the upcoming *Burnout Revenge* to the small screen, Criterion has opted to make *Burnout Legends* a best-of compilation of the series—think of it as *Burnout: Greatest Hits*. You'll be able to tool around favorite courses from past games; included in *Legends* will be Harbour Town from *Burnout*, Palm Bay Heights and Big Surf Shore from *Burnout 2*, and Downtown from *Burnout 3*. And all of these courses are being updated so they will mirror the look of *Burnout Revenge*.

You'll have a variety of modes available to you as well: Standards such as race, road rage, crash, eliminator, burning lap, and preview lap will all make appearances, plus the popular pursuit mode from *Burnout 2* will be resurrected. There will also be several modes unique to PSP, including pursuit rage, which is basically a meld of pursuit and road rage; legends face-off; and legends grand prix. Crash fans won't be left in the cold, either—right now, the plan is to have 70 to 80 crash junctions in the game.

Wi-Fi multiplayer will be a component of the game, and while the developers have yet to determine the number of opponents you'll be able to compete against, they're looking at doing more than just your standard connect-and-play. One idea they're experimenting with is providing content that's unlockable only through multiplayer matchups—for example, you could win a car after beating someone in eliminator mode. Something else they want to include is a single-race demo that you can beam to friends who might not yet have the game; the demo will work on your friend's PSP for as long as he leaves the power on.

So how does it look? To be frank, pretty amazing. The speed, while still not as blistering as it is on its console counterpart, has gotten exponentially faster in the month between the first and second times we got to play it. Producer Nick Channon says, "The biggest challenge has been to capture the look and sheer speed of *Burnout*. We want to make sure that we deliver all of this on the small screen." Handling is a little bit tougher than it is on the console versions—people may find themselves defaulting to the D-pad to control steering rather than the analog nub.

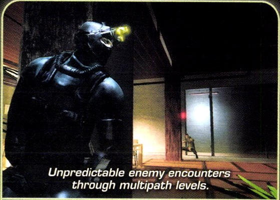
YOU CAN TOOL AROUND FAVORITE COURSES FROM PAST GAMES.

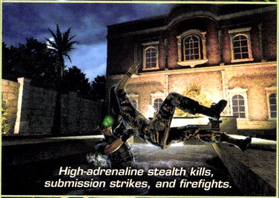
How does Channon feel about the possibility of people actually driving while playing *Burnout Legends*? When we ask, he responds, "I would hope that this is something no one would ever consider doing!" Consider yourself admonished. «

Pub. EA Games Dev. Criterion Release Fall

“FANTASTIC VISUALS
INNOVATIVE GAMEPLAY”
9.5 out of 10
PSM

ROTATE 180°


Unpredictable enemy encounters through multipath levels.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PlayStation.2

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MONKEY BUSINESS

The real Toyotami was actually born a peasant, but he proved his worth during military service. Nobunaga nicknamed him "the monkey" due to his slightly frail nonwarrior physique. This "monkey" went on to rule Japan.

ONIMUSHA 4

YES, THAT'S A 4 UP THERE

Wait, didn't series producer Keiji Inafune say that *Onimusha 3* was the last game in a trilogy?

Well, he meant that *Onimusha 3* was the last installment in the Nobunaga trilogy. The story of taking down demon warlord Nobunaga is now over; this next *Onimusha* is the first part of a new story line, which takes place about 15 years after the end of *Onimusha 3*. Basically, it's a historical Japanese version of "meet the new boss, same as the old boss," as Nobunaga's successor, Hideyoshi Toyotami, has now allied himself with the genma demons and seeks to mess up Japan as a result.

With the fresh story comes a fresh start in the overall game design (suspiciously similar to how Capcom "rebooted" the *Resident Evil* franchise with *RE4*). Previous *Onimusha* games have basically been more action-oriented *Resident Evil* games dressed in samurai armor—that is, relatively straightforward hack-n-slash action-adventures. *Onimusha 4*'s main changes include a more open-ended, nonlinear design and a buddy system for combat. In previous games, you just walked down a linear path and didn't have any flexibility in deciding where to go and when. Now, in *Onimusha 4*, you have more choices as to where you can go, and you can go back to previous areas and unlock new items and secrets. Sure, you can stick to the main path and play it like a previous *Onimusha* title, or you can choose to take the time to explore every nook and cranny for bonus items and weapons or revisit old areas and undertake new challenges to unlock even more loot.

The other big change to the game is the use of multiple characters. First off, don't expect to see actors such as Jean Reno and Takeshi Kaneshiro take up roles as Jacques and Samanosuke (respectively) again. *Onimusha 4* features new characters and a distinct lack of known actors (producer Yoshinori Ono says that Inafune wanted to introduce new characters instead of actors this time). You start off as Hideyasu Yuki, and you eventually gather four more characters for your entourage. As you zip around slaying genma demons, you can choose one of these four to be your partner in battle. You can not only switch back and forth between the two characters, but also order the other character to attack, defend, or just chill for a moment. Finally, you can pull off slick combined attacks that totally tear through all the demons in the area. Most of these characters are being kept a secret, but one we've learned about is Jubei Akane, a superagile little gal who can slow down enemy attacks. Each character is well balanced and provides an interesting combo that should provide for a decent measure of flexibility and replayability in the game.

Despite the lack of internationally recognized French fellow Jean Reno, *Onimusha 4* looks like a legitimate new start for the series, and hopefully it will continue the trend of making the fourth game in a series a whole new experience rather than a rehash of the previous three. «

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **Release** Fall

Staff Sergeant **Anthony Leavitt.** Specialist **Renny Sotero.** 10th Special Forces Group.

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Marc ECKO's GETTING UP

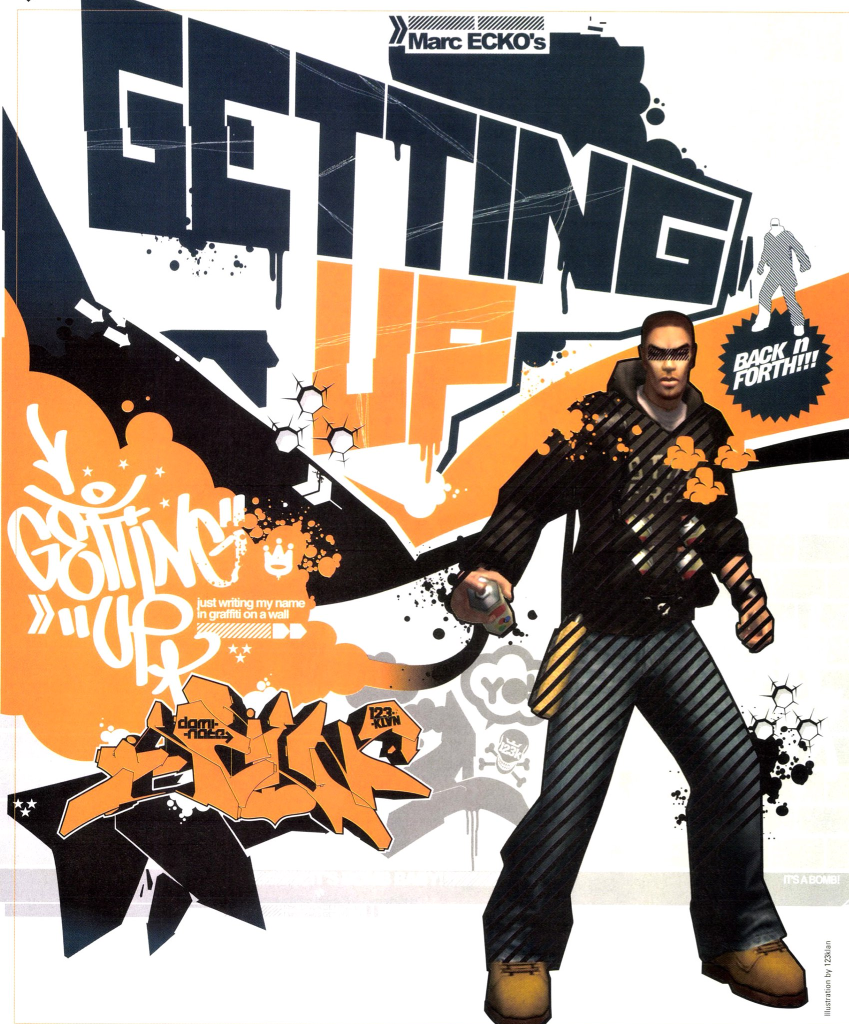
BACK n FORTH!!!
GETTING UP
just writing my name in graffiti on a wall
dami-nace
123-KLYN
123k
YO
IT'S A BOMB!

Illustration by 123klan

TAG!

MARC ECKO DREAMS IN PAINT

Clothing designer and graffiti artist Marc Ecko may be new to developing games, but that doesn't mean he doesn't have strong opinions on what is right and wrong about the industry. This past February he spoke at the DICE Summit and challenged the industry, telling attendees, "Your technology means f* all. Consumers don't give a s*** about you." He's putting his money where his mouth is—for a preview of his game, check out page 38. Here's the lowdown on what he hopes to accomplish and how the world has been changed by the proliferation of street art.**

OPM How is it working with a small development team?
MARC ECKO Atari as a publishing company is big, but the experience they allowed us to have—Bruno [Bonnell, Atari's CEO] was hell-bent on allowing us to operate like a truly independent team. It was very risky because he has shareholders to please, and it's a big organization with a lot of pressure, but he was convinced that if we approached the project with a traditional model where you marginalize an outsider's voice [then it wouldn't work]. I didn't know s*** about making games. I'm a gamer. I can tell you what I like about gameplay and the brands that I love, but I technically didn't understand what I know today. He was really taking a risk that I would be a quick learner and that The Collective was going to be a tolerant group.

OPM How hard is that, though? Obviously, this is your game and your idea, but there are other people messing around with it and putting their own spins on it.
ME It was hard in the first six months. There's a great story to be had with some of the old art for the game because I want people to see what the process was for myself and The Collective. And I think the product is better off for it. We got past this certain point—for us, it was last E3. Building that trailer as a visualization device was a test because we weren't even on the radar at that time. I knew that from a gameplay point of view, navigating a darkly lit space, there are problems with knowing what is navigable and what isn't. Knowing where I can tag and can't tag. Knowing that there were going to be technical limits putting graffiti everywhere. Knowing that I wanted a high level of production value on the graffiti art assets.

I think ultimately, as we build the brand, we'll move the product toward [more customization]. I even see derivative products we can take with the *Getting Up* brand and do more free-form, open-environment, multiplayer experiences—pit one crew against another. We can get there, but first I wanted to put the flag in the ground and create a really cool graffiti experience, and I knew to do that, I needed to have some other hook that would get the cynic on board. I needed a story component and some other gameplay mechanics to get the cynic [interested], and that's why working with The Collective has been such a rich experience in marrying these goals together.

OPM Well, from what we've seen, it seems you wanted to build a good action game and then work everything around that.
ME The principals of The Collective would always say, "Marc, we hear you, but we need to be committed to making a great game, and you have to understand that the gaming community will look at this and ask, 'How is this any different from *Jet Grind* or any other game with graffiti in it?'" It was very sobering to hear that.

OPM It's pretty obvious that The Collective's past experience with fighting mechanics is being put to good use.
ME They've done a nice job with it. It was funny because early on, from a marketing point of view, we thought everyone was going to see our fighting system and think *Def Jam Vendetta*. We thought the press might think it was something derivative because it was urban. It's not. You saw some of the animations for the characters, and some of them are funny and over the top and it's satisfying from a gameplay standpoint.

"MY WHOLE CAREER IS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF GRAFFITI."

OPM You mentioned earlier that you wanted to bring the graffiti culture to a broader audience, much like Tony Hawk did with skating. Are you worried about getting backlash from people that have been a part of the graffiti scene?
ME You mean like a selling-out thing? My whole career is the ultimate form of graffiti. There are going to be people that hate just like there are the skaters that hated on Tony Hawk, but there are also these artists out there that the broader part of pop culture should be honoring. There's not a set aesthetic that has had more influence on popular culture than graffiti over the years. It's a medium that where if you live in São Paulo and speak Portuguese and I'm in Newark and we don't know anything about each other, we can both be into graffiti. Why? Because it's cultural and there's something anthropological about it. It's crazy—when you travel around the rest of the world, you see that every city has graffiti.

I'm taking this culture and putting it on a pedestal. Yeah, I'm making a commercial product, but I'm bombing the system. I got inside the party. It's just digital graffiti as far as I'm concerned. It's been the same hustle and motivation. I make blazers and woven shirts—to me, getting my name inside that label is the same f***ing high that I used to get when I tagged the backseat of a bus. It's the same hustle and swagger that a kid has, to want to make something from nothing.

OPM What do you think fuels the culture?
ME It's a generation thing. I hope it's not lost. It's the fact that a lot of the leaders moving it didn't have s*** growing up. There's not a cultural movement outside of hip-hop that has spawned more marketers and entrepreneurs. The most tenacious entrepreneurs grew up with hip-hop—they have the same hustle and swagger—and I think that's what fuels it from a commercialization side. From a consumer side, people who realize

UNLIMITED CASH

The transition from making your own T-shirts to operating a company that earned over $300 million in 2002 selling men's apparel is one that most people would probably like to make. Still, Ecko hasn't lost sight of what it took to get to this point in his career.

ECKŌ UN
OBEY

THE SUPPORTING CAST

Much like the *Tony Hawk* games have featured real-life professional skaters, *Getting Up* will use some of the world's most renowned graffiti artists (pictured at left) to train and assist the main character.

COPE2 got his start in the late 1970s and is known for his work in the subways.

FUTURA has a similar background to Cope2 but is also known for pushing the medium as a legit form of expression.

SEEN was a major part of the artistic movement in New York during the 1980s. He got his start bombing trains, and now Seen's work is on display in a variety of museums.

SHEPARD FAIREY is probably the most well-known of all the artists; you might have seen his work in the form of massive Obey posters that feature a superimposed image of WWF wrestler Andre the Giant's face. Fairey's work has also found its way into museums across the country and around the world.

SMITH helped bring graffiti out of the shadows of the subways and onto the surface for everyone to see.

T-KID got his start in the late 1970s and still continues to paint murals in the Bronx.

[redacted]

they don't have s*** think, I'm going to do better than my father. There's that dream from when you're young, and that's not a black thing or a white thing. It's a human thing. You see it all over the country.

OPM What do you think when you see games like *Def Jam*? Does it ever upset you to see hip-hop culture presented in that way?
ME The consumer has to be educated by experiencing a range of products regardless of the medium. [*Def Jam*] is not our product. Is it a bad thing? Well, it's not something that I would opt to make given the opportunity to produce it or direct it, but that doesn't necessarily make it a bad thing. I didn't like *Jet Grind Radio*, but I know guys—the legendary graffiti artists we have in the game—that love that game. To them, it was just a fun game. There's room for all types of products out there. As long as it doesn't exploit it to the point where the cultural train runs off the track, you won't hear me kicking and screaming. This is America and everything is exploitative in America.

OPM After this game is released, how would you feel if you saw other companies rush in to do copycat games?
ME I would be flattered. It wouldn't surprise me because this is the problem with the gaming industry. You're in the entertainment industry and the rate to bring products to the market is so lagged that the publishers end up looking stupid. It's like DreamWorks and Pixar—one has a fish movie, then the other has a fish movie. They're on the heels of each other, so you suspect they might be copying. But it's a little [lame] to build a product that costs $5 to $8 million and an additional $5 to $8 million to market when it's just a copycat at its core.

OPM Do you think it would even be possible for this industry to have an independent element?
ME I think it has to move toward that as more companies become huge conglomerates. Take the *Madden* and NFL deal. EA's going to be forced to do something clever to get that spark back. Independence will be nurtured and the guys that take the risk on it will [benefit]. There is a bunch of creative people out there. I'm lucky. Who am I to be making a game? I was painting T-shirts in my garage years ago. Who am I to be sitting across from these really smart people that are doing the heavy lifting? I'm just one of hopefully many people that, given the opportunity, will step to the challenge.

It was my dream. I've been working E3 for seven years, looking around and walking with a folder and a script for the game.

OPM Did you shop the game around during that time?
ME Early on, I was doing some hustle s***. I would show it to the most low-end marketing person at any company—whoever would look.

OPM What was the reaction?
ME Maybe we can use your clothes in the game. [*Laughs*] We could put your logo in our game. All right, thanks. I did some of that. I'm not going to lie. EA was very generous with my brand and gave us a lot of breaks before a lot of other companies got in on it. We had a deal with *Madden* back in the day. I'm grateful for those opportunities to position my brand as a brand that's aware of gaming. As a gamer, I saw it as an emerging market and I wanted my brand to be positioned in that space. I was telling everyone that I wanted to sell enough Rhino sweatshirts in the hope that some executive would return my calls. That was my job. Everyone thinks I'm a clothing designer. No, I used a clothing design to get a meeting with Bruno Bonnell. It worked out. It was a slightly longer path, but you have to do what have you have to do sometimes.

> "EVERYTHING IS SO DERIVATIVE. COME UP WITH A F***ING NEW IDEA."

OPM It seems like there's really no outlet for people to freely pitch ideas like you did, especially when there's concern over who owns what once you make the pitch.
ME Well, everything is so derivative. Come up with a f***ing new idea. Here's a heads up—don't make a female with two guns. Here's another one—let's stop talking about the creative process from a technical point of view where you're trying to put things in silos. What is that product? Is it a shooter? Is it a first-person shooter?

In the movies, what was *2001: A Space Odyssey*? What was *Taxi Driver*? What was *The Godfather*? You couldn't classify those things. Yeah, you could put them in big, bold categories, but when you really get into the soul of the product, you see that they're really dynamic. *Star Wars* is science fiction, but it's also a very human story. They're trying to make these aliens very human and real.

Right now, the creative process in the gaming industry seems to start off with putting things in technical silos that the creative element is designed around. «

[redacted]

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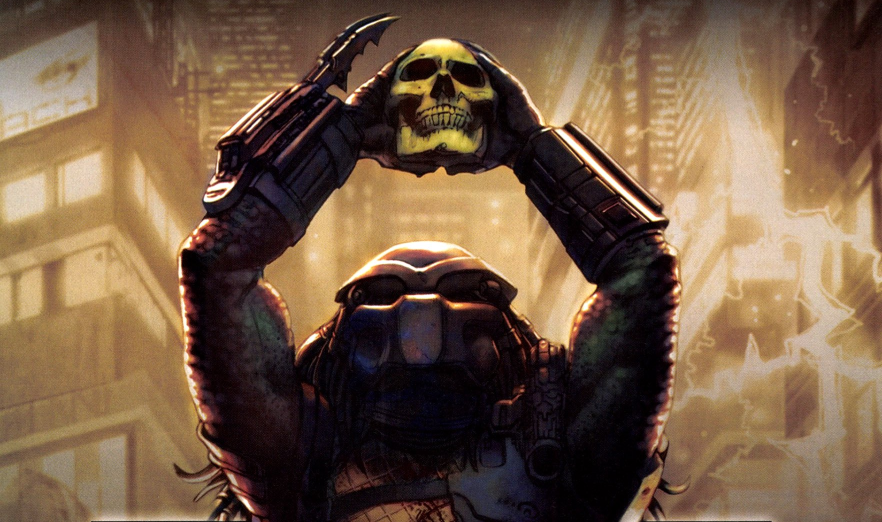

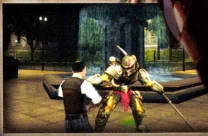

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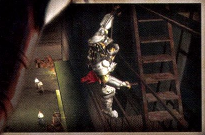

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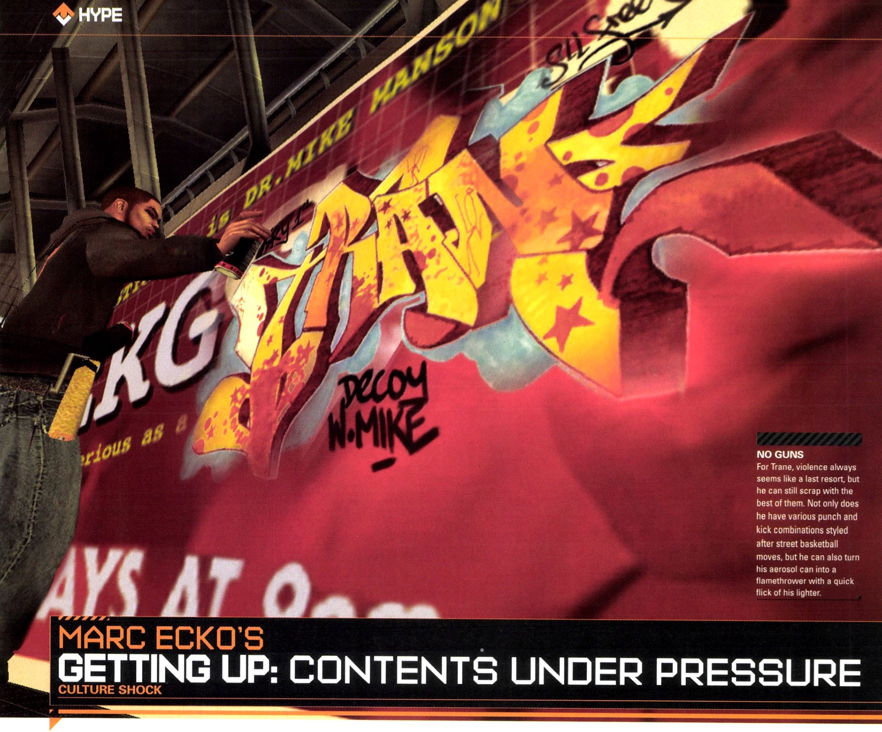


NO GUNS
For Trane, violence always seems like a last resort, but he can still scrap with the best of them. Not only does he have various punch and kick combinations styled after street basketball moves, but he can also turn his aerosol can into a flamethrower with a quick flick of his lighter.

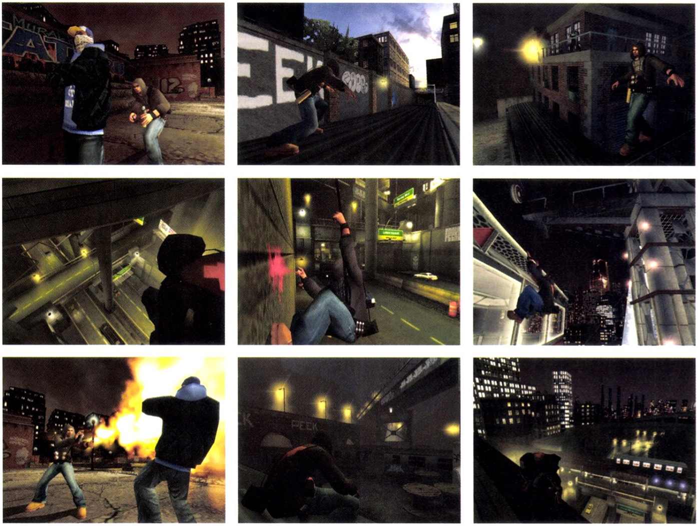
MARC ECKO'S
GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE
CULTURE SHOCK

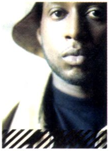
"We want to do for graffiti what Tony Hawk did for skateboarding," says Marc Ecko, clothing designer and now game designer. From the looks of it, Ecko and the team at The Collective are well on their way to accomplishing this feat with *Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure*, which delves deeper into graffiti culture than any game before it. Sure, other games have tried the street-art thing before: The *Jet Set Radio* games feature it prominently, and even *THUG2* tries to throw a little graffiti into the mix. But compared to *Getting Up*, all of these games merely gloss over what the culture is really about.

You might think there's a bit of a discrepancy here. Ecko is himself a graffiti artist, but what does a development team located in Newport Beach, CA, know about graffiti? Well, not only have members of the team extensively studied the ins and outs of tagging, but some have even participated in bombing runs by going to various locations and putting up their own tags to get a feel for what it's like to do the real thing. It's gotten so far into the minds of the game's producers that it has become a part of their subconscious: Now when they drive down the streets of Southern California, they look at different buildings or signs and think, what a great place that would be to put a tag.

So how does tagging buildings, an activity that's previously been only a side note in other games, translate into a full-fledged game? For starters, *Getting Up* was designed first and foremost as a game and not just a graffiti simulator. There are a few different facets to the gameplay mechanics—in addition to tagging, moves will range from stealth and platforming to hand-to-hand combat—but no single feature seemingly overwhelms the others. Each gameplay element has been designed to work with the others in an effort to re-create the environment of what it's like to stalk the city looking for suitable landmarks to tag so that Trane, the game's main character, can achieve his goals.

In *Getting Up*, you'll get an idea of where to put a tag thanks to a highlighting system. This system will show you not only the general target area, but also the type and size of art that you're about to paint. You'll never really have trouble finding spots, just as long as you take the time to really look around the level and explore the depths of the game's set-





ON THE MIC

Getting Up's lead character, Trane, will be voiced by Talib Kweli, a veteran hip-hop artist who has performed alongside the likes of Mos Def and DJ Hi-Tek in the group Black Star. Kweli also worked with Kanye West on one of his more popular songs, "Get By."

ting, New Radius (a slightly futuristic city that's under the control of a despotic government).

Imagine a situation in which you're underneath a highway overpass and you spot an enormous freeway sign, a perfect place for a big piece of art. Next, you have to figure out how to get to that spot, which might involve climbing pipes, shimmying over railings, or even leaping from one overhang to the next. Then you have to factor in the bystanders. If there are construction workers, you shouldn't have much trouble scrambling past them, but if members of the Vandal Squad or the Civil Conduct Keepers (otherwise known as a supremely brutal *RoboCop*-style police force) are around, then you're better off sneaking around corners and avoiding them completely rather than trying to take them head-on.

Once you get to the spot where you want to start the tag, it's time to bust out those aerosol cans, stencils, rollers, or whatever other graffiti equipment you have at the time. The act of actually making a tag is more dynamic than you might initially think. Instead of just pressing a button and having the tag magically appear, you have to use the analog stick to actually to move the can around and fill in the outline. Additionally, if you hold the spray in the same place for too long, then the paint will start to run, so you have to constantly move it around and make sure you're filling out the tag properly. Screw it up and you'll lose respect amongst your peers. Do it right and you get props for putting a massive tag where everyone can see it. Eventually, you'll move your way up from being a toy graffiti artist to being the most notorious artist in New Radius and a symbol for the rebellion against a tyrannical government. «

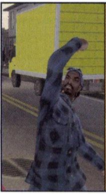
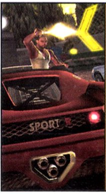
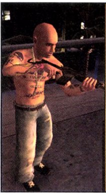
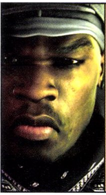
HOW DOES TAGGING BUILDINGS TRANSLATE INTO A FULL GAME?

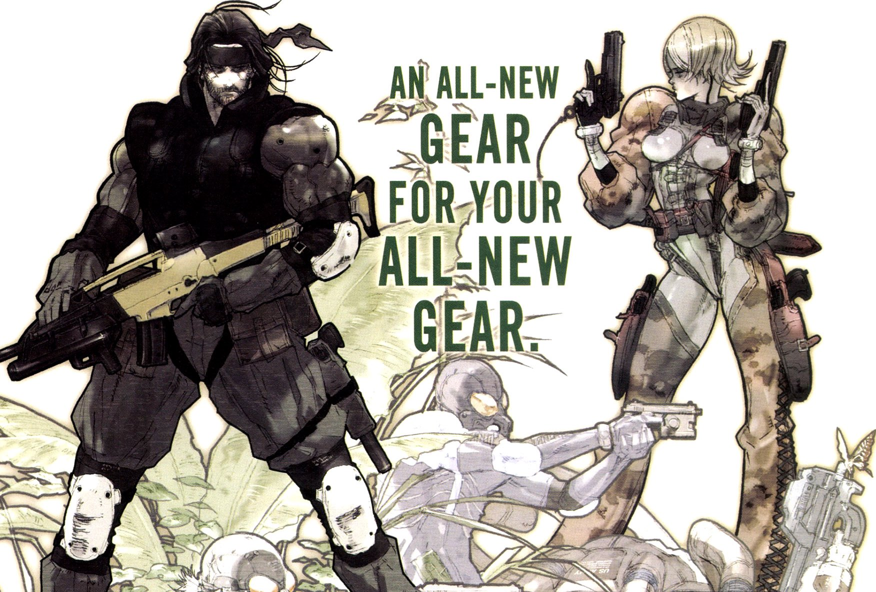
Pub. Atari **Dev.** The Collective **Release** September

SMELLS LIKE GTA

PREPARE FOR ANOTHER URBAN ASSAULT

With the echoes of *San Andreas* still rolling through the development community, a new wave of urban-themed games is on its way. How many of them will really offer anything new? You be the judge.

	THE PERPETRATOR	THE SETTING	THE SKINNY	IT'S NOT GTA BECAUSE	STAR POWER	OUTLOOK
	**FEAR & RESPECT** Midway Fall 2005	Los Angeles, CA	A reluctant urban hero named Goldie is unwillingly drawn back into the gang lifestyle when he tries to help out a troubled nephew. The role of Goldie will be played by Snoop Dogg.	According to producer Nathan Rose, *Fear & Respect* is "More like 'a day in the life' and less about run-and-gun.... Gunfights will be more true to life—you can't just stand in the open and start shooting; you'll need to take cover and be smart in gun combat."	Huge. In addition to lending his voice and likeness to the game, Snoop's been heavily involved in the project from day one, influencing everything from art to script. And *Boyz n the Hood* director John Singleton is writing the story, storyboarding the cinemas, and working closely with the developers.	Iffy. On the one hand, you've got Snoop pulling the strings and a real-life director making sure the story's there. On the other hand, you have a relatively untested development studio (Edge of Reality, best known for *Shark Tale* and *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition*) working on the game.
	**187 RIDE OR DIE** Ubisoft Summer 2005	Los Angeles, CA	A reluctant urban hero named Buck must defend his mentor's territory with heavily armed vehicles. It's a racing game! It's a shooting game! It's two great tastes in one! We're not sure whether to think of this as *Midnight Club* with guns or a hip-hop *Twisted Metal.*	There's a much greater focus on racing, with modes like death race and cop chase.	Middling. Larenz Tate (*Menace II Society*) and Noel Gugliemi (*The Fast and the Furious*) will lend their voices and likenesses to the game, which should make most of you say "...who?"	Could have potential—but people, Los Angeles just isn't that interesting a city to drive around in. Aside from that detail, the game at least appears to be breaking new ground by having all the shooting take place from the cars.
	**25 TO LIFE** Eidos Summer 2005	A fictional urban center	Two reluctant urban heroes named Detective Lester Williams and Andre "Freeze" Francis go head to head in an urban battlefield. It's "the first true cops-and-robbers game," per the press release, though it also could be described as *SOCOM* with cops and gangstas instead of SEALs and terrorists.	It's a shooter, really. There's no driving involved, and the focus is very obviously on online competition.	Practically nonexistent. The game will have a soundtrack featuring "the pioneers of yesterday and the biggest names of today." The list at this point includes big-name artists such as 2Pac, Public Enemy, KRS-One, and Xzibit.	Fairly grim. While the idea might sound intriguing on paper, the exploitative, cartoony nature of what we've seen so far seems guaranteed to alienate, well, just about everyone.
	**50 CENT: BULLETPROOF** Vivendi Universal Late 2005	New York, NY	A reluctant urban hero named 50 Cent gets shot nine times and vows to seek revenge. "Inspired by a climactic event" in 50 Cent's life, *Bulletproof* pits the rap star against the most dangerous crime families in New York City.	The hero is a real-world rap star.	Big. In addition to 50 Cent's own extensive involvement, the game's script is being written by *Sopranos* executive producer Terry Winter.	Unclear. The game is still very, very early, and details are few. Right now it sounds like an opportunistic vanity project from a rapper with more money than he knows what to do with—but there could be a real game here.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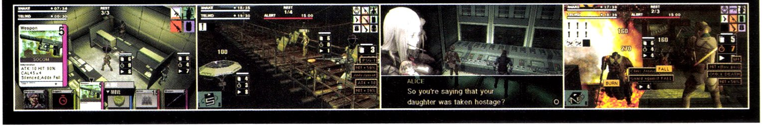
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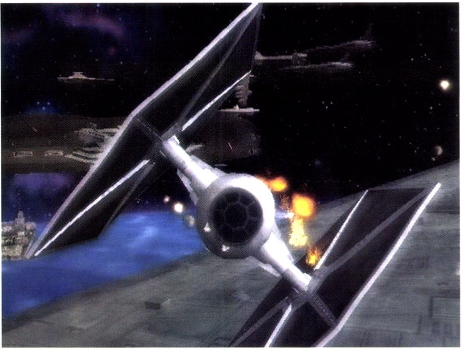
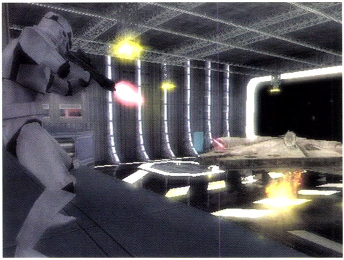




STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

SIX THINGS EVERY JEDI SHOULD KNOW

Since *Star Wars* doesn't have any special intergalactic guides or whatnot, we quickly assembled one to tell you the finer details of the recently announced *Battlefront II*. Use this cheat sheet to make yourself seem awesome and in the know in front of non-*OPM*-reading friends! Astound them with *Battlefront II* facts like the ones below!

01 You can fight in the infinite reaches of space! That is, you can now conduct space battles instead of remaining landlocked. So you can now reenact zippy scenes like those at the end of *Return of the Jedi* or the space battle above Coruscant at the beginning of *Episode III*.

02 There are 16 new levels, several of which are taken from *Episode III*. Right now, we don't quite understand either the significance or the pronunciation of places like Utapau or Mustafar, but man, if you love *Episode III*, you'll be able to shoot dudes in these places! Rock on, Wookiee style!

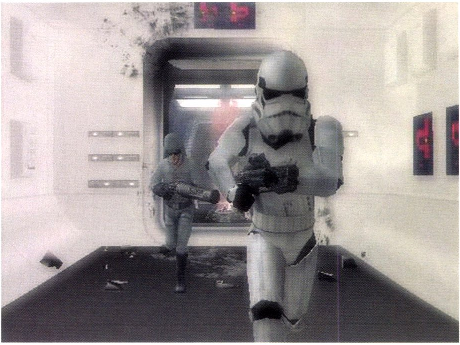
03 You can now fight in levels lifted from the original trilogy in addition to all the weird *Episode III* locations. If you like to roll old school in places like Leia's totally sweet spaceship from the beginning of *Episode IV* or the halls of the Death Star itself, then you can pretend that George listened to you and demanded that those levels be added in.

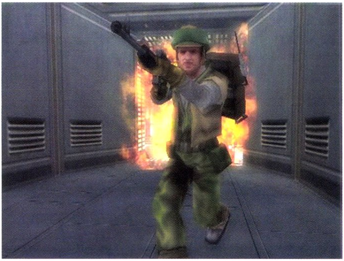
04 You can be a Jedi. Yes, while other dorks will zip around willy-nilly and take potshots with peashooters, you can end them with a simple swing or two. Or maybe you want to zap lightning from your fingers instead. Lightsabers, popular Jedi powers, and a whole lot of attitude will be part of your arsenal as a Jedi.

05 The single player isn't just a "you have no friends—ha-ha" version of the multiplayer game. The A.I. has been tuned to act more like actual dudes, and now there will be story elements! This game includes open-ended mission-based objectives, so you now have a purpose to your existence, rather than serving as just another weapon with a larynx.

06 George Lucas loves you all.

Pub. LucasArts **Dev.** Pandemic **Release** Fall





TALKING 'BOUT HISTORY

If you love to pretend that you have a time machine, this issue will help. Not only do we have a retrospective on good *Star Wars* games on page 112, but we also have a demo of the first *Battlefront*! Yes, the first one, so don't write letters to us about it. Just pretend you're back in September of 2004.

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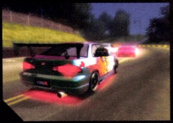

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DATA STREAM

THE NEWS IN BRIEF

PS3 FOR E3?

While the event scheduled for the end of March that was supposed to show more of the PlayStation 3's technology was eventually scrapped, Sony still plans to show some of what PlayStation 3 can do during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in May. Current speculation suggests that an assortment of demos will be on hand to demonstrate some of the new technical features of the system's hardware, which will be powered by the Cell processor. Visit www.1UP.com for up-to-the-minute reporting from the show floor.

OUT OF THE FAMILY

Francis Ford Coppola is one unhappy winemaker and director thanks to Paramount's decision to license the *Godfather* movie property to Electronic Arts. According to IMDb.com, the director said that the studio never informed him of the decision and that he disapproves of the use of *Godfather* characters in such a manner. "They use the characters everyone knows," said Coppola. "Then for the next hour they shoot and kill each other. I had absolutely nothing to do with the game and I disapprove."

THE BEST BOND

Everyone's (yes, everyone's) favorite iteration of James Bond is back. Sean Connery will provide the voice and likeness for 007 in EA's new *James Bond* game, *From Russia With Love*. The 1963 film of the same name featured 007 on a mission to retrieve special Russian equipment. Other members of the original cast will join Connery. "Videogames are an extremely popular form of entertainment today," said Connery. "I am looking forward to seeing how it all fits together."

NOTHING BETTER TO DO

Senator Hillary Clinton has officially jumped on the popular violence-in-videogames bandwagon, suggesting that violent videogames are a "major threat" to moral health in the United States. Taking a page out of Senator Joe Lieberman's playbook, Clinton suggested that games like *Grand Theft Auto* promote violence against women and encourage violence amongst different ethnic groups. She also used the word "dis" in her speech, indicating that perhaps Senator Clinton is now officially "hip."

THE OUTSIDER

NOOBS LIKE ME

ROBIN WILSON is lead singer for the Gin Blossoms and and enjoys physics and cooking shows. Find him on 1UP at theoutsider.1UP.com.

WELCOME TO ONLINE GAMING, YOU STUPID JERK.

Nearly 10 percent of PS2 owners in the United States currently play games online, with some 40,000 more joining the fray every month. That's about 3 million hardcore gamers, most of whom really enjoy humiliating newcomers (or "n00bs") like me. Until recently, I thought I was pretty good at videogames, seeing how I've been at this since the days of *Pong*, I've played all of the classics, I know who Sephiroth is, yadda, yadda, yadda. Surely, I know and understand videogames. But am I any good? Apparently not.

Being a n00b is almost as humiliating as being fired from Tower Records twice (take my word for it). For my first online game, I was so pumped that when I got into the lobby, I struggled with the keypad to announce, "First online race!" A response came back in about two seconds: "Hey Demosthenes, maybe you should find another lobby." Suddenly, I'm the dork who shows up at the park with new gear and says, "Hi guys, wanna play?" only to creep out the other kids. What a tool.

The *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal* postgame lobby was no more kind. I had to endure all seven other people laughing at me and telling me how much I sucked. They went on to suggest I give up and never play again. Welcome to online gaming, you stupid jerk.

n00b: It's a perfectly crafted bit of slang, really—a good score for the popular culture glossary. It always sounds like its coming from your high school archnemesis.

So for just how long will I remain a n00b, though? And what do you call the next rank up? Genome soldier, perhaps? Usually, I start to feel pretty cocky after five or six hours in a single-player game. But in *Ratchet & Clank*'s online modes, I've put in at least 15 hours and I still suck. The single-player campaign doesn't begin to compare in difficulty. I'm pretty sure I'll be getting my ass kicked for months before I'm truly competitive.

The upside to all this is that the hype and promises are real. Online multiplayer gaming truly is the most exciting, mind-blowing, challenging, and addictive shift in videogames since the birth of home consoles. Seriously, if you haven't yet, you gotta try this. Sure, the competition is brutal, but I promise that at least *I* won't laugh at you.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention the cheaters! Who friggin' knew that there are people who actually cheat at videogames online? Have you ever heard of anything so stupid? For the love of Pete, what's the point? It's not like it's the stock market, pro sports, or a urinalysis you have to fudge to keep your job at Tower Records. It's just a videogame. Cheating in videogames? Hmph, I hate Illinois Nazis. «

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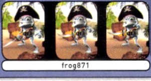
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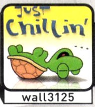
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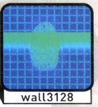
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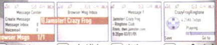

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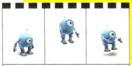
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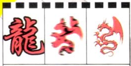
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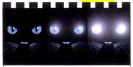
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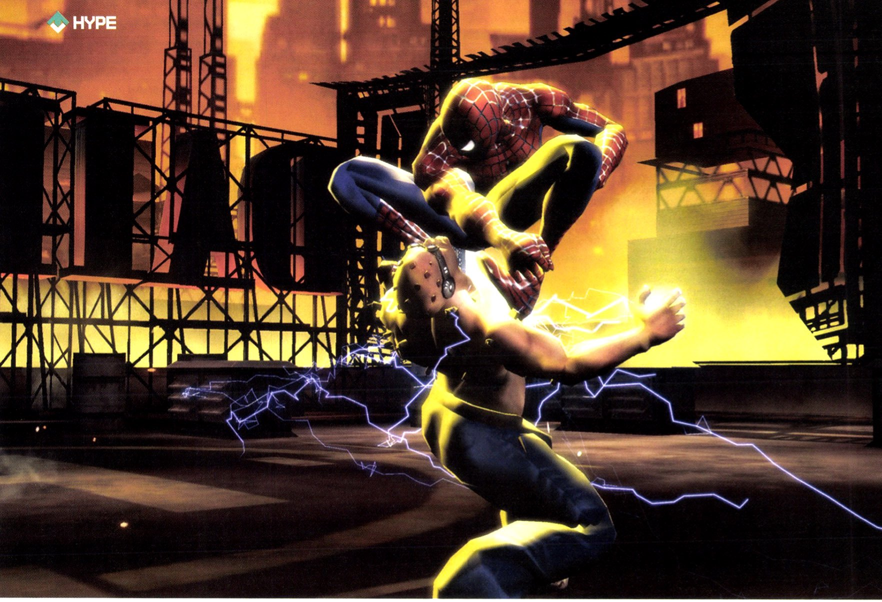


MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

NO, IT'S NOT MADDEN VERSUS THE HULK

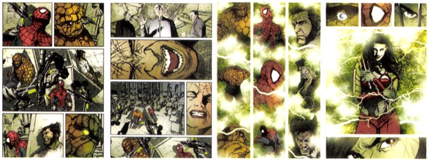
A year or so ago, EA quietly announced that it was entering a partnership to publish a game that will "pit superheroes from the Marvel universe against new EA heroes." Not much has been said since that initial mention, which left the door open for gamers and the press to joke that the untitled "EA versus Marvel" game will feature bouts such as "Tiger Woods versus Luke Cage" or "Jean Grey versus *SSX* girl." Well, both EA and Marvel have started talking, and they're giving some surprising details.

First off, the game won't have any existing characters from EA games, but rather wholly new heroes created just for EA. This might sound dopey and make people think that some corporate marketing dude is sitting at his desk figuring out what's hip and edgy for the kids, but EA has tapped Marvel talent (writers and artists) for the character creation and design.

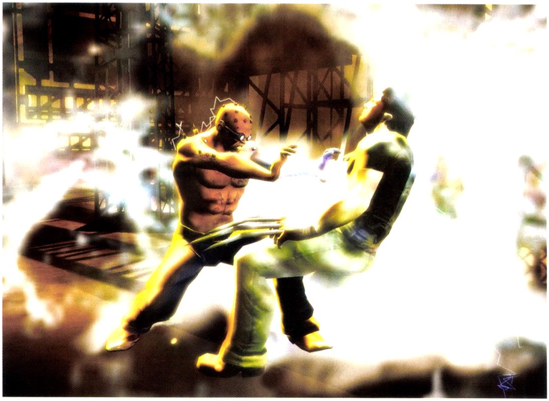
The game is directly linked to the upcoming miniseries *Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects*, in which Niles Van Roekel, an alien scientist, decides to create his own set of superhumans to take on characters such as Spider-Man, Wolverine, the Thing, and Elektra. The miniseries will be six issues, and each one will feature a new EA character, such as Johnny Ohm, who's pictured in the screen at the top. Marvel writer Greg Pak (who is handling the miniseries) told comic-book news site Newsarama.com: "What's got me really excited is that we've found the emotional hook. We're exploring that hidden core of doubt which may plague even the greatest heroes, as the Marvel characters and the new EA heroes struggle with the temptation of 'perfection' offered by the alien scientist's transformative technology."

BRAWLS ARE FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH PROPERTY DAMAGE.

Marvel senior editor Mark Paniccia (in a separate interview) also noted: "The backstory of the game and the new characters [are] an integral part of the comic. We're not revealing everything about them in the comic. We've agreed to save some surprises for the game. But you're getting real insight into some of them and an understanding of what happened to Niles Van Roekel to set the Imperfects into motion."



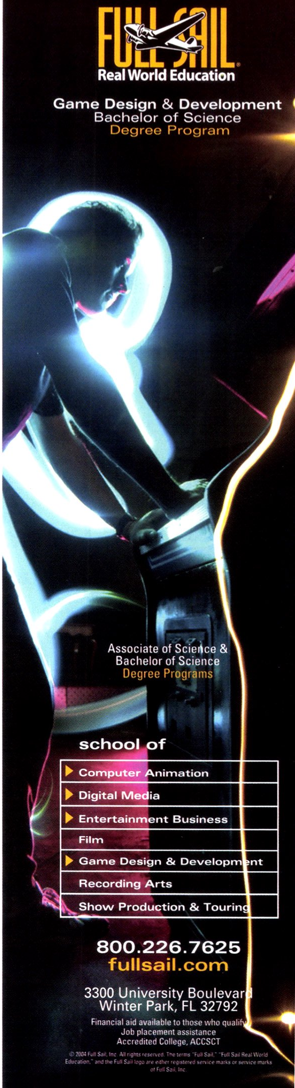
PAGE TO SCREEN These sample pages are from the first issue of the Marvel miniseries, written by rising Marvel writer Greg Pak and artist Renato Arlem. There's no dialogue here, but it's easy to figure out that Spidey, Thing, Wolverine and Elektra are hurting now.



As for the game, EA hasn't mentioned much, only that it's a fighter influenced by games such as *Power Stone* and *War of the Monsters* (in fact, while the screens may make the game look like it's based on the *Def Jam Fight for NY* engine, it's actually a totally new engine). And we're assuming that all of the Imperfects, of which two are named (Johnny Ohm and Brigade), are playable. The only confirmed Marvel characters are Spider-Man, Wolverine, and Iron Man (though, since the Thing and Elektra are specifically named as being part of the miniseries, we can assume they're in the game as well). Of course, superhero brawls are filled to the brim with property damage, so there will be destructible environments to simulate this. EA Canada is overseeing the project, while Nihilistic will be doing day-to-day development.

There's still a fair amount up in the air, and hopefully EA will show more signature Marvel heroes and prove that it can create interesting "EA heroes" to play as. Alas, this means you'll have to wait for a different game to simulate the *Need for Speed* cars fighting the Power Pack. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Nihilistic **Release** Fall



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CHARACTER OPTIONS

03

DETACH HERE

BUILT BY OPM

CLOSE

F1 SPECS

STATS

HEIGHT

WEIGHT

EYE COLOR

HAIR COLOR

BODY MASS

ARM SPAN

SHOE SIZE

STRENGTH

DETACH HERE

SPECIAL SKILLS

MIND READING

FIRE THROWING

RACE DRIVER

CLOSE

M1 SPECS

STATS

HEIGHT

WEIGHT

EYE COLOR

HAIR COLOR

BODY MASS

ARM SPAN

SHOE SIZE

STRENGTH

DETACH HERE

SPECIAL SKILLS

SWORD MASTER

EXPERT INTERROGATOR

JET PILOT

F1 SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

AVAILABLE WEAPON SYSTEMS

M1 SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

TARGETS UNIDENTIFIED

LOCATIONS:
KUALA LAMPUR
URUGUAY
SPAIN
SOUTH AFRICA
MICRONESIA

DETACH HERE

F1
M2

SUCCESS RATE 100%

BUILDING CHARACTER

EIGHT EXPERTS WEIGH IN ON WHAT MAKES GREAT GAME CHARACTERS GREAT

Sonic. Dante. Mega Man. Lara Croft. Each of these names evokes a vivid image in gamers' heads. And their capacity to do that is invaluable to companies that are doing everything they can to produce games that sell well. Having a recognizable character helps a game break through the noisy clutter on store shelves and stand out to people looking for something to play. The cost of game development increases annually—and the sharp cost jumps of developing for next-generation systems loom just around the corner—so high sales figures have become more important than ever for companies trying to make a profit.

So, what makes a character memorable? Why do gamers instantly identify with some while others pass so quickly that no one even notices?

David Jaffe, the creative director for Sony Santa Monica, who has headed up games such as *Twisted Metal* and *God of War*, says, "Good game characters are like good comic book characters in that the best ones represent a key idea, a key theme—like a strong, silent type for Solid Snake, or a cocky, stylish badass for Dante."

Keiji Inafune, the man behind Mega Man and producer of the *Onimusha* series, agrees. "The key to making a memorable character is keeping it simple," he says. "When you think about basic trademarks and other designs that are meant to stay with you, they usually are very easy to understand. Making an overly complex character design often has an adverse effect by making the consumer not 'get' the character's appeal."

Jaffe agrees. "Good game characters, like good comic characters, also need a signature look, a cool costume with a hook—Dante's trench coat, for example. Yes, there are deeper, more complex characters in games, but I think the ones that work the best are the simpler ones that convey a key theme or idea."

"The main issue is whether or not the player can make a connection with that character," adds Hideo Kojima, the creator of Solid Snake and the *Metal Gear* franchise. "To be a fictional hero, it must have believable human characteristics. These characteristics must resonate with the player in order for them to be empathetic with the character."

It's not always solely about the character, though, says Insomniac's Ted Price, who originated three of gaming's more popular characters: Spyro, Ratchet, and Clank. "I think it has as much to do with the game as it does with the character," he says. "A great character in a bad game will be less memorable than a not-so-great character in a great game."

And sometimes, trying to focus on making something memorable isn't necessarily the right approach, opines Toby Gard, the creator of Lara Croft. "In general, it's probably easier to think about what makes a character not memorable, which is mostly how similar they are in look and action to other characters.

"This is, unfortunately, where the game industry often gets it wrong," Gard continues. "Publishers sensibly want their game characters to appeal to the widest possible audience, but often instead end up with wishy-washy characters that appeal to no one."

So, taking all this into account, by what actual process were some of gaming's most beloved figures created? There's no simple answer: It turns out that there are as many different methods as there are characters.

In Inafune's experience, someone has to take the lead. "While a group may initially create a basic idea," he shares, "the final design itself will ultimately fall on the shoulders of an individual."

At other times, one person may come up with the initial idea but will then work with others to fine-tune it. "I come to the table with the vibe I want the character to have, the feeling I want him to give players, and the basic story," says Jaffe. "Then I work with many amazing artists who do many, many iterations until we can focus in on the perfect image that really represents the heart of the character. We probably went through 100 designs for Sweet Tooth for *Twisted Metal: Black*. We went through more than 300 for Kratos in *God of War*."

Evan Wells, who heads up Naughty Dog (birthplace of Crash Bandicoot and Jak and Daxter), says that in his experience, "Creating a character is an extraordinarily collaborative effort. Team members responsible for each area will contribute ideas that add up to the final product. Without a motivating story or interesting abilities and game mechanics, the character isn't anything more than pencil lines on a page or polygons on the screen."

It's interesting as a gamer playing as a new character for the first time to wonder about the people behind the scenes. What's going through developers' minds as they bring these figures to life? Are they thinking beyond that moment of creation, wondering what the future might hold?

> "THE BEST CHARACTERS REPRESENT A KEY IDEA."

In Gard's case, it was all about the here and now. "When I was making Lara, I wasn't really thinking much beyond the moment. Myself—and I think the whole team on the first *Tomb Raider*—were just caught up in the energy of creating something we thought was really cool. Everything that happened after that came as a bit of a surprise to all of us, I think."

Kojima was equally surprised by his success. "I certainly didn't think *Metal Gear*, let alone Snake, would continue as long as it has," he says.

Wells' experience is different, though. "It's always our goal to create franchisable characters," he says. "Just through the process of developing who the character is, we create a universe and a history that are large enough that we can't possibly explore all of it in one game."

And fellow Sony developer Insomniac comes into the process with a similar mindset. "With Ratchet and Clank," says Price, "our goal was to create a duo whose life span would stretch far beyond the first game and even the PS2." He adds, "Of course we were a little nervous about how gamers would react to the original *Ratchet & Clank* game, but when it began selling really well, we breathed a collective sigh of relief and knew that Ratchet and Clank would be around for a while."

Jaffe disagrees with that approach. "You hope they are successful and that they resonate with players, but I try not to worry about anything other than the game I am working on," he says. "Games designed to be

ONE HIT WONDERS

Sometimes you can fall in love with a single look. Which, in the case of some characters, is all we got. Some of the industry's biggest names share who they would want to see get an encore.

Toby Gard "Ben from *Full Throttle*."

Keiji Inafune "Super Joe. And if you know him, I'll give you some serious brownie points!"

David Jaffe "I would love to see the kid from *Ico* again—he was pretty cool."

Hideo Kojima "*MGS1*'s Decoy Octopus."

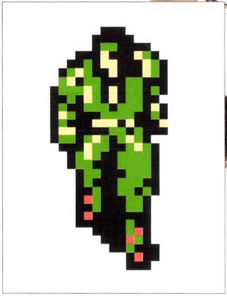
Ted Price "Death in *Conker's Bad Fur Day*. And yes, I know that there's a 'new' version coming for Xbox, but that doesn't really count."

Evan Wells "I really enjoyed *Ico* and would like to see a game with those characters again."

Hirokazu Yasuhara "If I had to say, Klayman in *Neverhood*."

PROFILE: SOLID SNAKE

One of gaming's most enduring characters, Snake was first introduced in 1987's *Metal Gear* (which was released on NES and MSX). Since then, he has appeared in 11 more games, which have been set between the years 1964 (*Metal Gear Solid 3*) and 2016 (*Metal Gear Acid*).



franchises tend to feel a bit soulless in my opinion. They feel like a corporate decision, not an artistic one, and I think players can tell the difference. If it happens, it happens."

Hideki Kamiya, who worked with Tsuyoshi Tanaka on the creation of Dante, thinks looking too far ahead is putting the cart before the horse. "We didn't want to get ahead of ourselves and think about sequels. If the character flopped, then there wouldn't be any follow-up after all." He adds, "But I do have to say that after making Dante, I felt he was such a cool character that it would be a waste not to use him again."

If a game is even modestly successful, it's fairly standard that gamers can count on seeing the protagonist make another appearance in a sequel. But has this practice of capitalizing on a familiar face become a crutch for publishers looking to make a quick buck? Jaffe thinks so. "Sequels should only get made if there is a real chance for progressing the game and if the gamemakers really feel compelled to make another version," he says. "Otherwise, I am opposed—on a creative level—to sequels. They can be very good for business, so I understand the need. Still, it sucks."

Inafune also thinks that it's a lazy practice, one that's ultimately harmful to the quality of games. "Videogame characters are so central that it limits creativity and allows less originality in the long run."

But Price thinks that revisiting characters can actually allow developers to make a better game. "I think that established characters give game designers an opportunity to focus on being innovative," he argues. "I know that sounds a little oxymoronic, but there are so many hurdles associated with introducing a new character that designers can't take as many risks with the design as they'd like. Once gamers have embraced a character, designers can let loose more frequently."

"The problem with making an original game," adds Gard, "is that it's difficult for it to get noticed amongst the massive deluge of monthly releases. In some ways it's better to try to take an existing franchise in a new direction so that at least you will get shelf space, rather than release a new title and find that no one will stock it."

And as many people have pointed out, even if the game industry does make heavy use of sequels, that hardly makes it unique. "It's a common practice across all forms of entertainment," says Wells. "It's natural that if people have enjoyed a game, or book, or movie starring a particular cast of characters that they would want to play, or read, or watch another one with those same characters."

As much as people might hate it, ultimately, the bottom line has to be one of a company's main considerations; otherwise, it's likely that company won't be around to make any more games. "Despite grousing about lack of originality, gamers definitely gravitate toward characters and games they find familiar," points out Price. "There is a huge demand for sequels to good games, and it just makes sense that the industry would first try to satisfy that demand and then take risks on new IP."

If it seems a financial inevitability that most characters will make multiple outings, then how do designers meet the challenge of keeping characters perpetually interesting to a critical audience? "I think they can be kept interesting," says Jaffe, "but they need to be reinvented and transformed to keep with the times, both from a gameplay standpoint and a thematic standpoint. And the transformation needs to come from an inspired place, not because the bottom financial line is demanding it.

"I still think the core of Lara Croft is very interesting," he continues. "But they need to redo the mechanics of the game as well as adjust her character in order to keep her relevant to today's audiences. I think if you look at how many gamers are no longer as interested in Nintendo's Mario, although he is a brilliant, amazing character, you will see that even the best characters need to adapt or risk fading from the public's mind."

"*The Simpsons* has been going for quite a while, and I still want to see more," points out Gard. "The challenge is in finding new, interesting things for the characters to be doing, but there are enough serialized characters who enjoy continued success for us to be able to say it's possible."

Hirokazu Yasuhara, who was one of Sonic's creators and now works on the *Jak* games, also looks beyond the gaming industry for ideas on how to keep things fresh. "We can see good reference on Disney's characters. They have seen subtle additions and retouches for a long time. So if a character receives these kinds of 'changes,' he or she will live longer." But, he warns, "If it is not changed at all (in game design, art style, or whatever), a character will have likely spent its life by the third sequel."

It's also obvious when a publisher is looking to milk the license over the wishes of the developer. Yasuhara says, "Usually, sequel titles have shorter development times, so [a decline in quality] can occur easily."

"EVEN THE BEST CHARACTERS NEED TO ADAPT."

Gard adds, "The problem is, with crushing release schedules due to yearly sequels, you saturate the audience and destroy the team's ability to bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the development process."

Another way characters can lose their original spark is if a property gets transferred to a studio other than the one that originated it. Price knows: He watched that happen when Spyro, a character he helped create, was sold to Vivendi Universal. "The franchise may go to a different team that doesn't have the same love for the character—and that can certainly cause problems."

"Usually that is the case when an attempt to cash in on a popular series is made," interjects Wells. "A new developer will sometimes miss what the essence of the original game's success was. However, if enough time has passed and the character is presented in a brand-new way, it's possible to breathe new life into a franchise. *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* comes to mind."

The Prince is perhaps the perfect example of how there is always hope. As Inafune argues, "All characters have merit, even ones that seem like they only serve to annoy."

Wells agrees. "I believe in second chances. Even if a character seems played out, I always have hope that sometime in the future some clever designer will do something inspiring with them." «

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Whatever the reason, some characters are more timeless than others. We asked our participants who they thought had done the best job of remaining compelling over the years.

Toby Gard "Link. He's been around for a long time, and I still can't wait to check out his next adventure."

Keiji Inafune "Link from the *Zelda* series."

David Jaffe "Solid Snake has been around since the '80s and he still works. Maybe it's because as tech improves, we're able to go beyond the cardboard-cutout aspect of him that we first knew."

Ted Price "Link—hands down. Nintendo has done a brilliant job of reinventing Link over and over, and as a result, the *Zelda* franchise has been one of the most enduring in this industry."

Evan Wells "Konami has done a great job with the *Metal Gear* franchise and Snake."

Hirokazu Yasuhara "I would say it's Link in *The Legend of Zelda*."

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

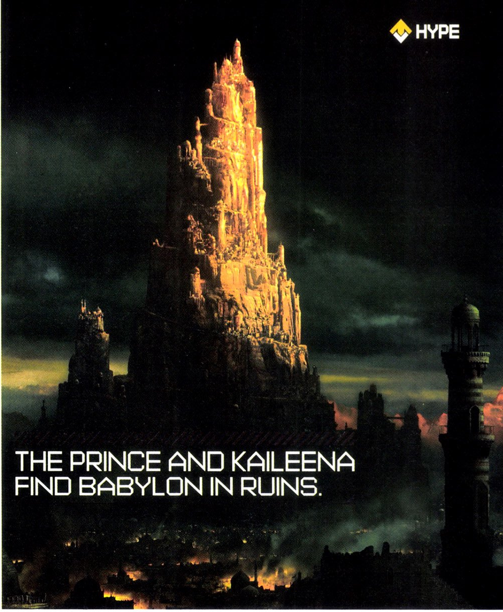
Good for Ubisoft for proving that an original game character can be a big success in an age when the sequel is king. While *Prince of Persia* traces its roots all the way to the 1980s, as far as anyone in the current generation of gaming is concerned, 2002's *Sands of Time* was the Prince's debut. That game turned out to be a huge critical success but fell far short of financial expectations. Time of year (it shipped in the notoriously crowded November), lack of buzz, and even, yes it's true, anti–Middle Eastern sentiment were cited as reasons for *Sands of Time*'s lackluster performance.

Undaunted, Ubisoft followed up *Sands of Time* with last fall's *Warrior Within*, in which the Prince takes a much darker, bloodier turn. The M-rated reworking paid off as Ubisoft scored a double win, both critically and financially.

Moving quickly to capitalize on that momentum, Ubisoft is readying *Prince of Persia: Kindred Blades* for a fall 2005 release. The basic plot picks up where *Warrior Within* left off: The Prince and Kaileena arrive in Babylon to find it nearly in ruins from war. The Prince discovers he is an unwelcome stranger in his hometown and learns what is behind this unexpected turn of events: By destroying the Sands of Time, he has sparked the rise of a darker, stronger self—the Dark Prince. In a fit of mistaken identity, the Prince's father (aka the King) seeks to kill his son, thinking he is the evil Dark Prince. Somewhere along the way, Kaileena sacrifices herself for her dearly beloved (aka the Prince). Ah, true love.

Through a new open-ended game world, our Prince will leap, wall-run, climb, somersault, and rewind his way to an eventual solution...and undoubtedly lop off a few heads while he's at it. Ubisoft promises an improved combat system and the introduction of something it's calling "speed stealth," a concept that will be revealed in greater detail at a later date. The Dark Prince is reportedly a playable character with his own set of combat moves and combos. And good news for *Sands of Time* fans: Ubisoft plans to make the Prince more personal by having him share more of his thoughts and emotions like he did in *Sands of Time* ("No, that's not the way it happened"). Gone is *Warrior Within*'s heavy metal soundtrack; a replacement is yet to be determined. Ubisoft promises more princely surprises in the coming months. Readers should expect a playable demo sometime in the fall. «

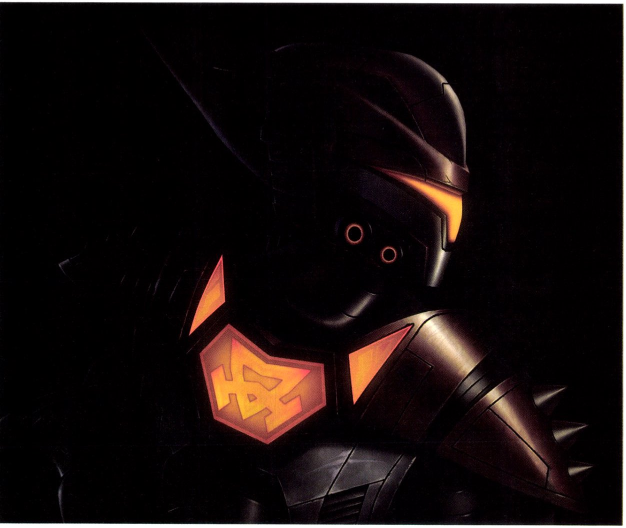
Pub Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal **Release** November



THE PRINCE AND KAILEENA FIND BABYLON IN RUINS.

PRINCE NOT SO CHARMING

We don't know what he looks like (and Ubi isn't saying yet), but we do know that the Dark Prince is a more powerful and brutal version of the Prince we know and love. Oh, and the King wants him dead.



RATCHET: DEADLOCKED

THE RUNNING MAN IS A LOMBAX

What happens when interstellar heroes Ratchet and Clank are kidnapped and forced to participate in a series of to-the-death battles to be televised on an underground reality-TV show called *DreadZone*? Well, for one thing, Ratchet grows up in a hurry.

Deadlocked is the setting for this trial by fire, and before all you *Ratchet* fans start rolling your eyes at the "darker" tone of the game, you should hear where Insomniac is coming from. "The overwhelming consensus was that if we were going to do another [*Ratchet* game]," says Insomniac's vice president of gameplay, Brian Hastings, "we wanted to do something that was a challenge for us. We wanted to do something new. And so we thought, do we really want to save the galaxy from another maniacal villain, or is there something more personal or more intense we could do?

"We don't feel like we are going darker," he continues. "We're still a humorous game, which I think is the heart and soul of *Ratchet*. We're just going in a direction we feel is more unified, more sophisticated. It's a direction that we feel will appeal to an older crowd, but it still has the things to make it a lighthearted game and a fun experience."

Changes made to the gameplay include an expanded weapon system that allows players to customize Ratchet's weapons to a vast degree with a host of swappable modifications. The biggest addition, though, is likely to be Ratchet's robotic support squad: Through prelevel customization and a simple in-game command menu, Ratchet will be able to direct his teammates to perform tasks both general (providing covering fire, for example) and specific (setting up a zip line to get him from one end of the arena to the other).

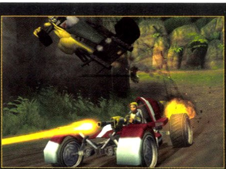
In addition, you'll be able to employ a live human to help you progress through the story mode via splitscreen or online co-op play. And, of course, with the success of *Up Your Arsenal*'s online play, *Deadlocked* is making some serious strides in the area of eight-way multiplayer combat. The game will feature five online modes, including conquest, an update to *UYA*'s siege mode. On top of that, you'll be able to commandeer five new vehicles, from streamlined versions of *UYA*'s two-person rides to new monsters such as the Puma (sleek and speedy) or the Land Stalker (a walking tank).

In light of all these changes, you may think *Deadlocked* is "the new direction" for *Ratchet*, for better or worse. But don't be so sure; Insomniac is more likely to continue to reimagine the franchise than to continue in this particular vein. "We always want to challenge ourselves to do something new," says Hastings, "both for the sake of the team and for the audience. Kind of like *Final Fantasy*—it's a different story every time, and sometimes it's different art direction, but there are some things that make it a *Final Fantasy* game. And with *Ratchet & Clank*, there are a lot of things—the humor, the characters, the weapons—that make it a *Ratchet & Clank* game. But we're going to do what challenges us." «

Pub Sony CEA **Dev** Insomniac **Release** Fall

LOMBAXPLOITATION

As you no doubt know, Ratchet is a lombax—a fictional mammal from the planet Veldin. But it turns out that in Europe, a lombax is also a support girdle for men. Unfortunate coincidence? Or bizarre inside joke? You make the call.



JAK X

JAK TEAM RACING?

We should have seen *Jak X* coming. After all, Naughty Dog followed up three blockbuster *Crash* games with the excellent *Crash Team Racing*; if history is any guide, we can assume *Jak X* is a game meant to tide fans over while Naughty Dog quietly develops an entirely new technology-pushing PS3 product.

Which is not to say *Jak X* is not receiving the studio's full attention. Yes, it may appear that Naughty Dog simply grabbed the dune-buggy physics from *Jak 3* and threw them into their own game, but all it takes is one lap around one of the 20 wide, sprawling tracks to feel the difference. Gone are the hypersensitive physics of *Jak 3*'s oft-frustrating dune-buggy missions, replaced with smooth handling and a very noticeable sense of speed. Over the course of the game's 100-plus missions, you'll learn more about Jak, Daxter, and their pals, as well as some other key players in the *Jak* saga.

You won't just race against Jak's friends, though—you'll also be able to race against your own. The game will support six-way online multiplayer as well as two-player splitscreen. (And if you're concerned about Naughty Dog's first foray into online play, don't be; at this early stage, the game is already running as smoothly as anyone could hope for.) And while online, you'll be able to show off your personalized ride. As you progress through the single-player game, you'll gain the ability to upgrade your vehicle's performance and appearance—as with a street racer, each player will have a unique vehicle.

We'll admit "Jak Team Racing" sounds a bit underwhelming on paper, but we found ourselves pleasantly surprised by how much fun the game was right off the bat and how easy it was to get into. But the question remains: Why another racing game? Naughty Dog copresident Evan Wells says it was a no-brainer. "Something that's always been part of the *Jak* universe is racing," he tells us. "Even the earliest concepts behind the games—all of Jak's looks had these racing goggles, and Daxter had these flaps...it's always been about racing, and it seemed like it was something in their universe that deserved its own game." «

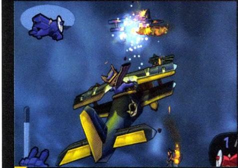
Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Naughty Dog **Release** Fall

DAX GETS HIS DUE

Naughty Dog recently let slip that a studio called Ready at Dawn is working on another game in the *Jak* universe. Only this one will star Daxter—and it'll be on PSP. No further details are available, except this: According to Naughty Dog's Wells, while the two games are different, playing the Daxter game will let you open up items in *Jak X*.

SLY 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

SLY, SLIER, SLIEST



It's comforting and even heartwarming to see Sly Cooper back in action again. Gaming's favorite (only?) raccoon's quirky comic-book world, with its entertaining characters, story lines, and fun old-school play, has consistently drawn critical praise and, apparently, healthy sales.

At least healthy enough for Sony to continue supporting the franchise and for Sucker Punch to stay inspired to keep *Sly* fresh. This fall will see the release of a third installment in the series, and while the look and feel will be familiar, fans should expect some interesting surprises in *Sly 3 : Honor Among Thieves*.

First, a few plot spoilers: Those who got to the end of *Sly 2* will recall the final battle with Clockwerk. That fracas landed Bentley in the hospital. In *Sly 3* you'll find our heroic turtle confined to a wheelchair, though not at all unable to help his cohort in crime (Sly) track down the Cooper family fortune. Along the way, they'll recruit Murray, who had left the thieving life due to his guilt over the role he may have played in Bentley's injuries. But wait, a rival gang is seeking the same fortune, and so the fun begins.

Sly 3 introduces splitscreen head-to-head and co-op play. In one of several scenarios, you'll stealthily sneak around a cityscape (Venice in this case) as Sly, nabbing treasure while the other player guides Carmelita to track you down and stop you. In an effective gameplay twist, Sly can disguise himself as an object so foes will simply pass him by. Within the two-player mode, you'll pick up power-ups that will let you do things like high jumping or transporting. The introduction of a fun dogfighting (as in World War I biplanes) sequence in the single-player mode will hopefully make the cut as a multiplayer game.

New playable characters include Carmelita Fox and "lounge lizard" Dimitri. A greater range of combat moves are promised for Sly and Murray, as well as for Bentley and his Swiss Army knife–like wheelchair (it has everything). *OPM* readers should expect a playable demo when *Sly 3* sneaks into stores around November. «

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Sucker Punch Productions **Release** Fall

TOMB RAIDER:

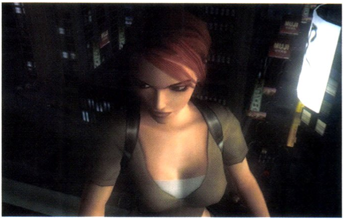
REINVENTING LARA: CAN EIDOS MAKE YOU CARE ABOUT TOMB RAIDER AGAIN?

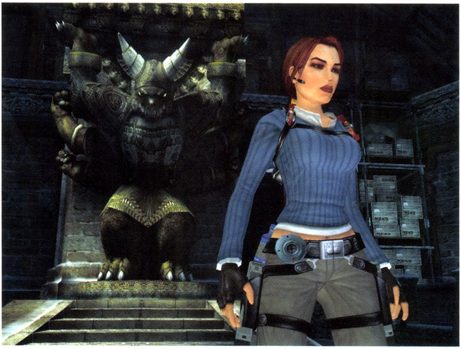
Lara Croft is kind of like a hot ex-girlfriend. Yeah sure, the breakup might have been ugly, but then you see her after a year or so, and she's looking pretty good, and she's giving you that look, so you decide to give things another try. And before you know it, you're sitting in some bar crying in your beer because your heart's been broken again.

So will Crystal Dynamics help cure Lara of her man-eating ways? Eidos certainly hopes so, because a financial disappointment would mean a big hit to the company's bottom line. Eidos is not unaware of this, which is perhaps why Chip Blundell, vice president of brand management for Eidos, seems a bit nervous when we sit down to talk with him.

"We can't afford not to make a great game," he tells us. One of the first things the team did was sit down and discuss the brand values of *Tomb Raider*. It turns out that *Tomb Raider* as a franchise stands for a lot of things, many of which are fairly standard for action games (entertainment, action, intelligence in problem solving). However, there are values that actually help distinguish Lara from other action heroes—specifically, tomb raiding, gunplay, and travel to exotic locales. But the most important thing they realized, as Blundell puts it, is that "It's not *our* brand." What he means is that Lara actually belongs to gamers. What do gamers want? Gamers want a return to those things that made Lara unique.

So Crystal is going back to the franchise's roots. Though *Angel of Darkness* was originally supposed to be the first installment of a new Lara trilogy, that story line has been scrapped and the team is starting over. The screens that have been released so far for *Legend* look much less gothic than *Angel of Darkness* does. As you can see here, Lara is back in her natural habitat—clambering through remote locations and raiding those tombs she's made so famous. And one of the most immediate changes gamers should notice about *Legend* is to the control scheme, which is not surprising since *Angel of Darkness*' was criticized for being, well, atrocious. "What we do with Lara needs to be done better than other third-person action games," says Blundell. And if that means the control scheme needs a complete overhaul, then that is what the team will do.



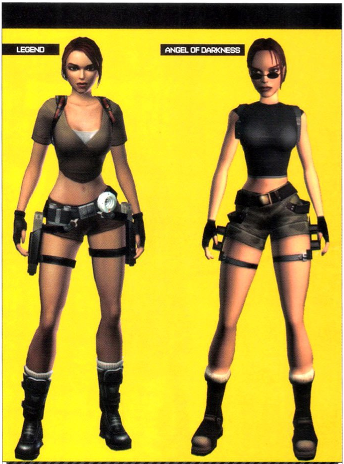


LEGEND

The story line is being kept under wraps for the time being, but the action component is going to be increased, which means the overall pace of the game should pick up as a result. And given the core values of the brand (well, that and the screenshots on this page), we will go out on a limb and predict that adventuring in tombs will comprise at least a portion of the action. As for any other details, you'll have to wait with everyone else to see what Crystal—and Lara—have in store.

Frankly, however, the plot is of secondary import in most gamers' minds. What they really want to know is if Lara will be fun to be with again. Because, for better or for worse, that is something no amount of brand managing can disguise. «

Pub. Eidos **Dev.** Crystal Dynamics **Release** Q1 2006



MAKE ME OVER

One of the first things Eidos did was give Lara a makeover, providing wardrobe, hairstyle, and accessory updates. The cosmetic changes aside (a V neck has been added to the shirt, the shorts are cut a bit higher on the leg), the most significant change is to the type of gun Lara has holstered on her supple thighs. Rather than the Desert Eagles she has used in previous *Tomb Raider*s, she's now sporting a pair of 9mm pistols instead.

Why the switch? Well, we're theorizing that Lara was just tired of carrying those heavy cannons around. Desert Eagles are pretty unwieldy, weighing in at almost four pounds each. The smaller-caliber gun, on the other hand, is much lighter—a fully loaded standard Glock, for example, weighs less than two pounds. And it's still plenty powerful—9mm pistols are the standard-issue gun for a majority of law enforcement officers.

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GO AHEAD, MAKE MY GAME

SCREENWRITING LEGEND JOHN MILIUS JOINS THE MEDAL OF HONOR TEAM

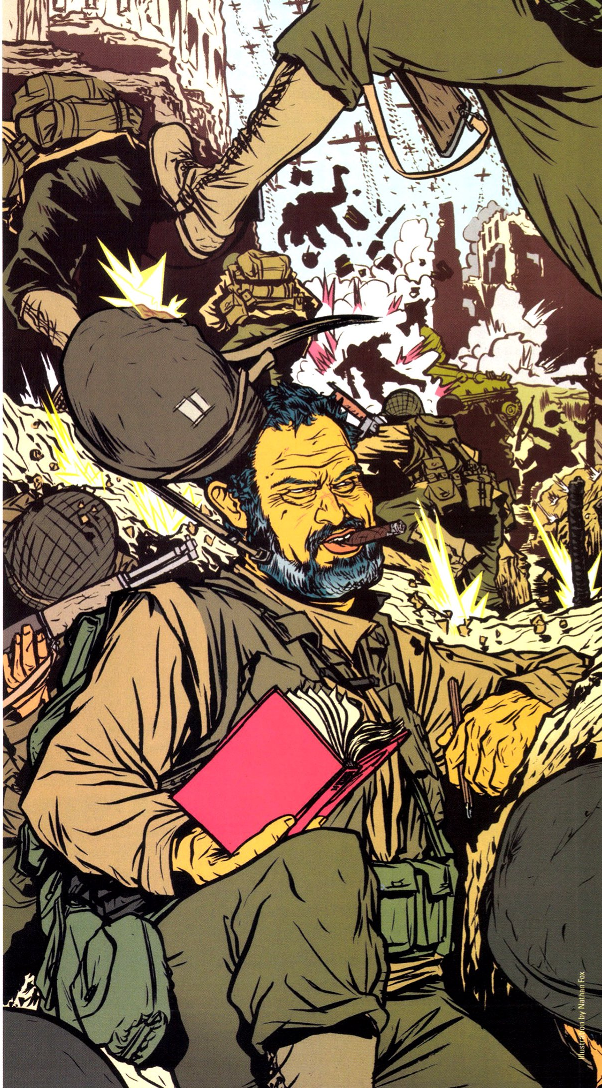

Illustration by Nathan Fox

***Apocalypse Now,* *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean, The Wind and the Lion*—these are the stuff of film legend, and only a legend could be behind them. John Milius has written, directed, and produced films and TV shows for some 40 years. Blame him for introducing "Go ahead, make my day," and "I love the smell of napalm in the morning" into the American pop-culture lexicon.**

But it was Milius' expertise in military history and his ability to build cinematic experiences that caught the attention of Electronic Arts and the *Medal of Honor: European Assault* development team. He recently joined them to put the finishing touches on the game, and he recently joined *OPM* to explain how he got into games and why he may stay.

OPM You've penned some of the most acclaimed movies of all time. Why videogames?
JOHN MILIUS Well, it seemed like a good thing to do, and friends of mine said, "Gee, you'd really like games," and I used to play these war games when I was a kid, table games like *Gettysburg* and *Blitzkrieg*.

OPM The Avalon Hill games?
JM Yeah. *Panzer Leader*, games like that. I loved those games. I loved the idea that you could refight the Guadalcanal campaign. Or you could refight some Napoleonic campaign. And the same ideas apply to [videogaming]: You learned a tremendous amount about history playing those games. But [videogames have] taken it to a much greater level.

OPM Have you actually played any videogames?
JM I played a game with Spielberg called *Aces over Europe*.

OPM We remember it.
JM And of course, with *Aces over Europe*, you could have different levels of complexity. You could be a raw recruit in a kind of so-so airplane fighting another raw recruit. Or you could be in the very best P-51 American airplane fighting the great German ace Gunther Rall in an Me-262—and he would always shoot you down very quickly. I remember Spielberg saying that I could learn to play this until I finally shot [Rall] down. What would I have done at the end? I'd go out in the sun and I'd say "I did it. I shot down Gunther Rall!" Then I'd say, "What have I done?"

OPM How are you being used in the making of *Medal of Honor: European Assault*?
JM The development team uses me very effectively. They say, "Tell these stories of history. Tell how you might get us to Stalingrad." What's good about it is I'm not sitting there trying to say, "OK, I'm just writing a scene." It's a collaborative effort. We all sit around and talk about it. They go off and take this stuff that I've given them, and they employ it into the game.

OPM But it's obviously much different from what you're used to in movies.
JM Ultimately, it'd be more like doing a television series, because you've got the ability to tell a story theoretically over a long period of time. You can tell a lot of different facets [of the story], whereas a movie has to be contained. When you're writing a movie, you're alone. And you're just thinking of the shape of the movie. In a game, you're thinking of the shape of the whole story, of the whole historical context that it goes into.

OPM You've both directed and written for the big screen. Do you rely on one discipline more than the other when approaching games?
JM I'm mostly just storytelling.

OPM So which comes first for you, the character or the subject matter?
JM It's really the subject matter, then how the character will apply to that. The characters come out of the subject.

OPM Of the characters you've created, is there a central driving force that they share? If so, is this a construct that can be applied to the characters in *Medal of Honor*?
JM Oh, sure. All the characters that are any good in anything have human foibles and human limitations, and are swept up in a great event of history, and just swept along in the great river of history. That's all that makes a good story. And so what's interesting is that you follow somebody through that, and hopefully there's some reason for telling the story, that something is accomplished, so that you, hopefully, at the end of the day, go, "Well, this has some meaning to it." The only reason we have all this stuff is because we're trying to give life a meaning. And all dramatization, novels, and recordings of history are supposed to do that.

OPM Do you have a favorite World War II battle or story?
JM Oh, absolutely. The best story in World War II, bar none, and it is probably the best battle in history to study—you can never know enough about it; it is the very best human battle ever fought—is Stalingrad.

It has just the most wonderful arrogant villain and the impossibility of it to start with. Stalingrad is so far from where the war starts that the people are completely oblivious and convinced that this will never be part of their lives. And then they become the focal point of the whole war.

You have that; you have the enemy. There's nothing more heroic than a Communist people's defense, either, where everybody is involved and everybody is fighting for the great Motherland. And you have in that battle the greatest revenge. You have weather. Stalingrad is everything. I could do a whole game on Stalingrad. I could do 10 movies.

OPM Compared to other wars, is World War II more or less compelling as a war upon which to base a game?
JM I can't think of any other war that's as good as World War II, because it has such great villains and such great heroes and just the right amount of technology—really neat-looking airplanes, machine guns are better looking than in any other war. The artillery, the tanks—they have personality.

OPM But some of your best movies, like *Judge Roy Bean* and *Jeremiah Johnson*, have been set in the American West.
JM Well, there are three great American myths, and one of them's the Old West. One of them's World War II. And the third one is the Mafia.

OPM And World War II is a great myth because....
JM Because it's the New World coming to save the Old. It's the New World saying, "We came here with this egalitarian society of farmers and cattlemen and cowboys and gangsters. We're gonna come to your decadent society of aristocrats and knights and peasants and all that. Everything's gone wrong there, and we're gonna come and save it, and we're not gonna ask anything for that. We're gonna drive through the streets when we save it and throw candy to the people, instead of rape and pillage. And when we're done, we're going to give you money to rebuild all your cities. And for that, as long as you're alive, you'll screw us over."

"IN A GAME, YOU'RE THINKING OF THE SHAPE OF THE WHOLE STORY."

OPM How would you compare making a game versus making a movie?
JM Much better people.

OPM Was Coppola that tough?
JM Oh, no, that was the good part. Believe me. That was when we were young; that part was great. It's just deteriorated since then. You're in Hollywood long enough, you get very, very cynical about the human condition. There was a great story where [Robert] Mitchum was arrested for smoking dope and he was put in jail in Palm Springs. And when they let him out, he was asked, "How was it being in jail, Bob?" And he answered, "I was with a much better class of people than I'm used to."

He wasn't kidding.

OPM So you like the games business....
JM I love going down to EA. The people are just young people, just working. They're really motivated, they love what they're doing, they're really excited. Some guy comes running up to me and he says, "What do you know about an FG-42?" I mean, this guy's discovered some obscure weapon, and he's thrilled about it. And "Look, I got pictures, isn't that neat looking?" It's wonderful to see.

What was really exciting was that everybody was so intrigued with history itself. You don't find that in movies. You find people saying, if you say, "I want an FG-42," they'll answer, "Well, where do we rent one of those?"

OPM Were you at USC when George Lucas was there?
JM Yes. We were among four or five other graduates, he and I.

OPM Do you keep in touch with him?
JM Not really. He's sort of gone off into his own world, like Montezuma. «

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

The storied first-person shooter series brings us to the European theater in 1942 in *Medal of Honor: European Assault*. You'll play U.S. Army Lieutenant William Holt, the first field agent of the newly formed Office of Strategic Services (the OSS, precursor to the CIA). Painstakingly historically accurate, *European Assault* will include single-player and multiplayer missions.

Pub. Electronic Arts
Dev. EA Los Angeles
Release Summer

MILIUS FILMOGRAPHY

John Milius has been involved in some 30 films. A few of his more notable works:

Jeremiah Johnson
(1972 – wrote)
The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean
(1972– wrote)
Magnum Force
(1973 –wrote)
The Wind and the Lion
(1975 - wrote and directed)
Apocalypse Now
(1979 – wrote and executive produced)
1941
(1979 – story)
Conan the Barbarian
(1982 – wrote and directed)
Red Dawn
(1984 - wrote and directed)

NBA SHOWTIME

PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL BALKS AT EXCLUSIVITY

No exclusive basketball license for you, EA! Ignoring recent moves by other sports leagues, the National Basketball Association has entered into agreements with Electronic Arts, Midway, Atari, Take-Two, and Sony in regard to NBA-licensed basketball games. The terms of the agreements are unusual for the industry but indicate some dynamic thinking on the NBA's part.

Both Take-Two and Electronic Arts will be able to release yearly simulation-style basketball games on multiple platforms, meaning the *2K* series and the *Live* series will still be going head-to-head with each other. Meanwhile, Sony can continue to release its own simulation basketball game yearly on the PS2. Midway and Electronic Arts have the ability to produce arcade-style basketball games, but the companies will rotate their releases each year. *NBA Street* will come out one year, with *NBA Ballers* taking its place the following year. Additionally, those looking for a simplified version of b-ball will be happy to know that Atari can release its *Backyard Basketball* games on a yearly basis.

The amount of money involved is around $400 million, but the NBA will have the ability to make some extra money through in-game advertising. The league plans to sell ads on billboards and other areas of an arena, much like it would for an actual game. Perhaps the NFL and now the NCAA, both of which have signed exclusive contracts with Electronic Arts, should've taken advantage of the situation instead of throwing all of their eggs into one basket. «

THE NCAA DEAL

EA now has exclusive rights to 200 stadiums and schools for its college football game, *NCAA Football*. The deal lasts for six years, so if you want a taste of PlayStation-style college football, EA has the only game in town.

JAPANTOWN

SQUARE AND ENIX, SITTING IN A TREE

ANDREW VESTAL lives in Tokyo and works in game translation. You can check out more of his game knowledge at www.1UP.com.

Some people remember where they were when they heard Kennedy was shot; I remember where I was when I heard about the Square Enix merger. It was November 26, 2002, and I was in the second day of an English teachers' conference here in Japan. I was trying not to fall asleep during a presentation on classroom discipline when I got a cell-phone mail from a friend: "SQUARE + ENIX 2 MERGE."

"Holy crap!" I said out loud. The other teachers' eyes all turned to me. "Uh...Square and Enix are merging," I said.

"Holy crap!" said Josh, a fellow gamer. Everyone else looked confused and uncomfortable.

But the merger (acquisition, really; Enix bought Square) was big news. Not just because of the obvious narrative twist—two longtime rivals team up to make games together!—but because of what it implied about the beleaguered Japanese industry. Square, despite its *Final Fantasy* franchise, was in dire need of a cash infusion, and Enix needed titles to fill its balance sheet between *Dragon Quest* releases. Both companies specialized in role-playing games; surely, this was a match made in heaven.

That was two years ago\ How have things turned out for this new Japanese megacorporation? From a financial standpoint, things are just peachy; the company has reported strong profits each quarter, and the next earnings sheet, featuring *Dragon Quest VIII*, should be the best yet.

But from a development standpoint, the merger has yielded few benefits, with virtually no crossover between the staff of the two companies. Part of the reason might be Enix's continued reliance on outsourced development: *Dragon Quest VIII* was made by Level-5, *Radiata Stories* by Tri-Ace, and the upcoming *Grandia III* is from Game Arts. Instead of "borrowing" Square staffers, Enix franchises have stuck to their traditional external teams. This separation from the day-to-day details of the merger explains why "Enix side" games have continued to meet their expected release dates.

The "Square side," on the other hand, has seen incredible turmoil. After a strong PS2 start with *Final Fantasy X* and *Kingdom Hearts*, Square since the merger has only managed to produce a few handheld games and B-list franchise flogging. Tent pole releases like *Final Fantasy XII* and *Kingdom Hearts II* are running nearly a year behind schedule and have no set release dates. The *Final Fantasy VII* spin-offs and Nintendo DS titles have had so few details announced that they might as well not exist. Under Enix's watch, Square's creators have had trouble, well, creating.

Some of Square's talent has set off in search of greener pastures, with the highest profile departure being *Final Fantasy* series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi. His Mistwalker studio has been headhunting within Square Enix with a promise of "old Square-style management," suggesting that the new Enix-style management has ruffled a few feathers.

Though Square Enix is certainly stronger financially than either company was alone, management hiccups have led to severe delays and an end-of-generation glut of content. In the end, the merger was still a good idea, but even good ideas need careful planning to reach their full potential. The greatest challenge of next-gen software development isn't programming or art, but managing the 300-person teams these projects require. Trust that "things will work out eventually," and you could be in for a wait. «

SQUARE'S CREATORS HAVE HAD TROUBLE, WELL, CREATING.

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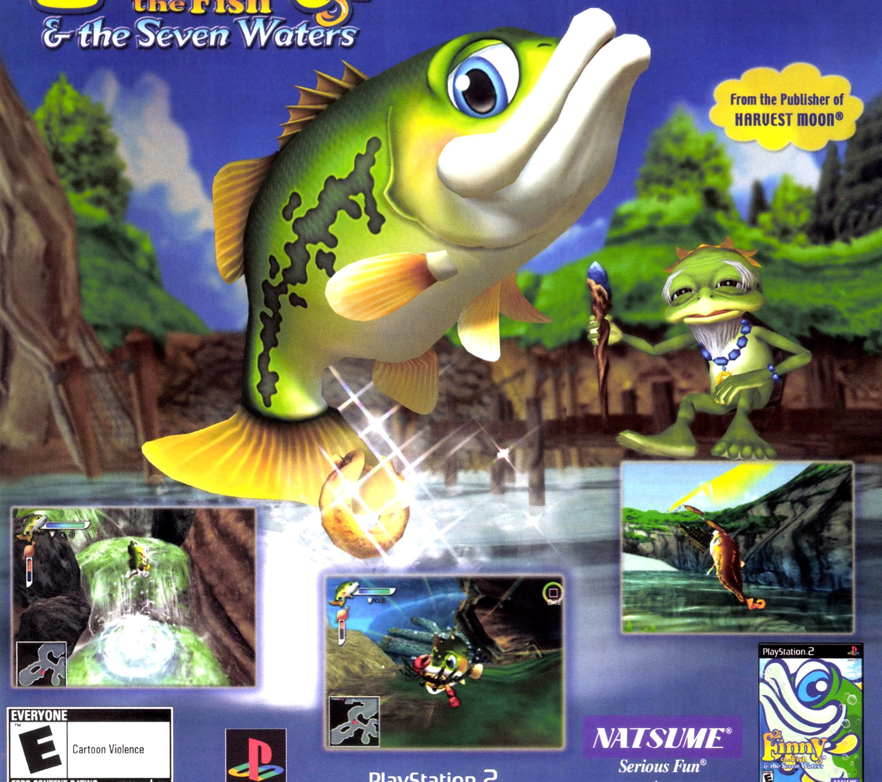

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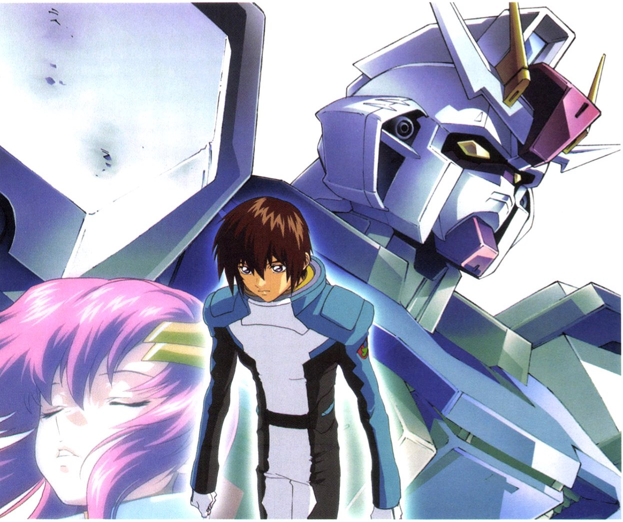


ANIMANIA

JUNE IS NOW DECLARED BIG HUMANOID ROBOT MONTH

SEED KEEPS GROWING

While *Gundam Seed* is about to finish its run on the Cartoon Network, Bandai is reloading another salvo of modern *Mobile Suit* for this summer. Not long after the 10th and final *Seed* volume arrives in stores on May 10, three compilation movies of the new *Gundam* series will hit the States.

The three movies, which are similar to Bandai's condensations of the 1979 *Gundam* TV show, provide a compressed retelling of the full series with several extra scenes added. Each of the three 94-minute films features between 15 and 20 minutes of new footage, and Bandai also plans to include "Beyond the Stars," an epilogue providing more closure to the series. Whether you're a fan who wants a complete collection or you're looking to consume the films in a more economical package, they should be worth taking a closer look at.

Bandai is also fast-tracking the American release of *Gundam Seed Destiny*, the TV sequel series that's currently airing in Japan. Set two years after the original show's conclusion, *Destiny* delivers amped-up animation and a far more complex plot in the grand tradition of *Zeta Gundam*. Though Bandai won't say exactly when it's coming (other than sometime "soon"), it'll be worth the wait—so far, the series has proven to be one of the best mecha shows in years.

MOBILE SUIT, MEET MOBILE POLICE

Meanwhile, a different flavor of robot action is continuing to make its way out of Central Park Media. Another corner of the *Patlabor* franchise hits DVD on June 14 with the first volume of the *New Files* OVA series.

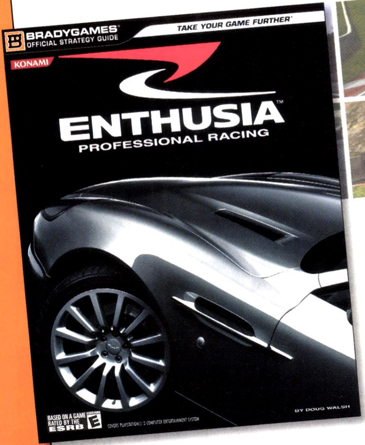
"Patlabor" is short for "patrol labor,"—for "labor," read "big humanoid robot." The story of a Tokyo police division dedicated to battling mechanized crime, it dates to the in-between period from 1988 to the early '90s, when the space-opera style of *Gundam* gave way to more varied and quirky robot shows. The show is driven by a team full of future stars (including Mamoru Oshii and Kazunori Ito, who are, respectively, the director and screenwriter of *Ghost in the Shell*) and blends drama, action, and comedy against a background that's very much like the real world...except, of course, for all the big humanoid robots.

While they require some grounding in the more serious TV series, the *New Files* episodes are some of the show's most entertaining, including a cracking four-part action story and several hilarious parody one-shots (sending up Akira, Ultraman, and the PC dungeon-hack classic *Wizardry*, among others). Don't miss the chance to check them out, along with more of the *Patlabor* that's already available on DVD from CPM.

DAYS AND DATES

Patlabor features the mecha designs of Yutaka Izubuchi, whose excellent modern mecha epic *RahXephon* comes out in a cheap $90 collected edition on May 17. *Planetes: Volume One*, profiled last month, now has a firm June 14 release date. The *Read or Die* TV series ends with a bang (plus a collectors' box and Anita King action figure) when volume seven hits on June 21. Finally, though the DVD is out and selling quite well alongside *Porco Rosso* and *The Cat Returns*, Disney plans to send Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaa* out for a small theatrical release, so watch for a chance to see it on the silver screen this summer. « *Dave Smith*

Think a racing game doesn't need a strategy guide?



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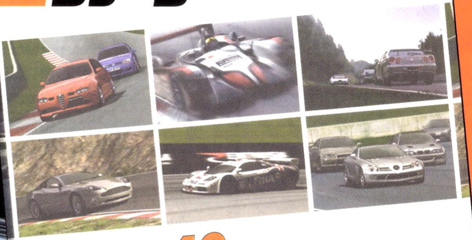

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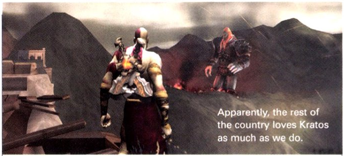
BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

SALES, RENTALS, TRENDS, AND ODDITIES—THE STATS THAT SHAPE YOUR VIDEOGAME WORLD



Apparently, the rest of the country loves Kratos as much as we do.

PS2 TOP 20 SALES

	Title (Publisher)	Score
1	God of War (Sony CEA)	●●●●●
2	Gran Turismo 4 (Sony CEA)	●●●●●
3	MVP Baseball 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
4	Devil May Cry 3 (Capcom)	●●●●◖
5	Fight Night Round 2 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
6	Tekken 5 (Namco)	●●●●
7	MX vs. ATV Unleashed (THQ)	●●●●
8	Major League Baseball 2K5 (2K Games)	●●●●
9	Brothers in Arms (Ubisoft)	●●●
10	Dynasty Warriors 5 (Koei)	●●●◖
11	Dragon Ball Z: Sagas (Atari)	●●◖
12	NARC (Midway)	◖
13	NBA Street V3 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
14	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (Ubisoft)	●●●●●
15	NCAA March Madness 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●
16	NBA Live 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
17	MLB 2006 (Sony CEA)	●●●◖
18	Musashi Samurai Legend (Square Enix)	●●●
19	FIFA Soccer 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●●
20	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar)	●●●●●

1UP'S 10 MOST WANTED PS2 GAMES

1	GTA: San Andreas	Rockstar
2	FF VII: Advent Children	Square Enix
3	SOCOM 3	Sony CEA
4	Gran Turismo 4	Sony CEA
5	Midnight Club 3	Rockstar
6	The Godfather	EA Games
7	NFS Underground 2	EA Games
8	Final Fantasy XII	Square Enix
9	Playboy: The Mansion	Arush
10	God of War	Sony CEA

JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	WE8: Liveware Evolution	Konami
2	Tekken 5	Namco
3	Wild Arms: 4th Detonator	Sony CEI
4	Dynasty Warriors 5	Koei
5	Makai Kingdom	Nippon Ichi
6	Shining Force Neo	Sega
7	One Piece Grand Battle! Rush	Bandai
8	Enthusia Professional Racing	Konami
9	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms X	Koei
10	NANA	Konami

PSP TOP 10 SALES

1	Untold Legends	SOE
2	Twisted Metal: Head-On	SCEA
3	Wipeout Pure	SCEA
4	NFS Underground Rivals	EA
5	Metal Gear Acid	Konami
6	Lumines	Ubisoft
7	THUG2 Remix	Activision
8	Ridge Racer	Namco
9	Tiger Woods PGA Tour	EA
10	Dynasty Warriors	Koei

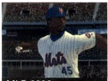
TOP 10 RENTALS, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (XB)	Ubisoft
2	DBZ: Sagas (PS2)	Atari
3	Gran Turismo 4 (PS2)	Sony CEA
4	God of War (PS2)	Sony CEA
5	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (PS2)	Ubisoft
6	MX vs ATV Unleashed (PS2)	THQ
7	GTA: San Andreas (PS2)	Rockstar
8	Republic Commando (XB)	LucasArts
9	Fight Night Round 2 (PS2)	EA Sports
10	NBA Street V3 (PS2)	EA Sports

Tekken 5

MX vs. ATV Unleashed

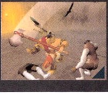
Dynasty Warriors 5



MLB 2006

Source: EB Games, March 2005. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. Most Wanted sources: Americasmostwanted.com, CNN, Scholastic.

TREND SPOTTER



MASSIVE WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION

This season's hot new accessory for videogame characters appears to be a gigantic bladed weapon. Kratos, Dante, Zasalamel, Rau—all the cool kids are sporting cutting-edge weaponry. But you should probably get permission from your mom before you go imitating them.

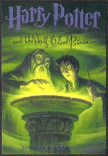
MOST WANTED

1

The rank of the Cadillac Escalade EXT on the list of most popular cars to steal in 2004.

837

The number of fugitives captured with the help of the TV show *America's Most Wanted.*



10.8

The number of copies, in millions, that will be printed for the first run of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.*

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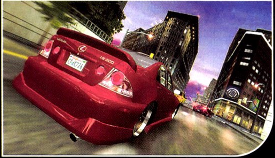

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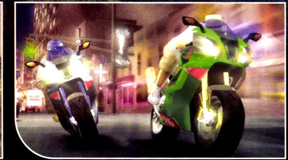

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Mild Violence

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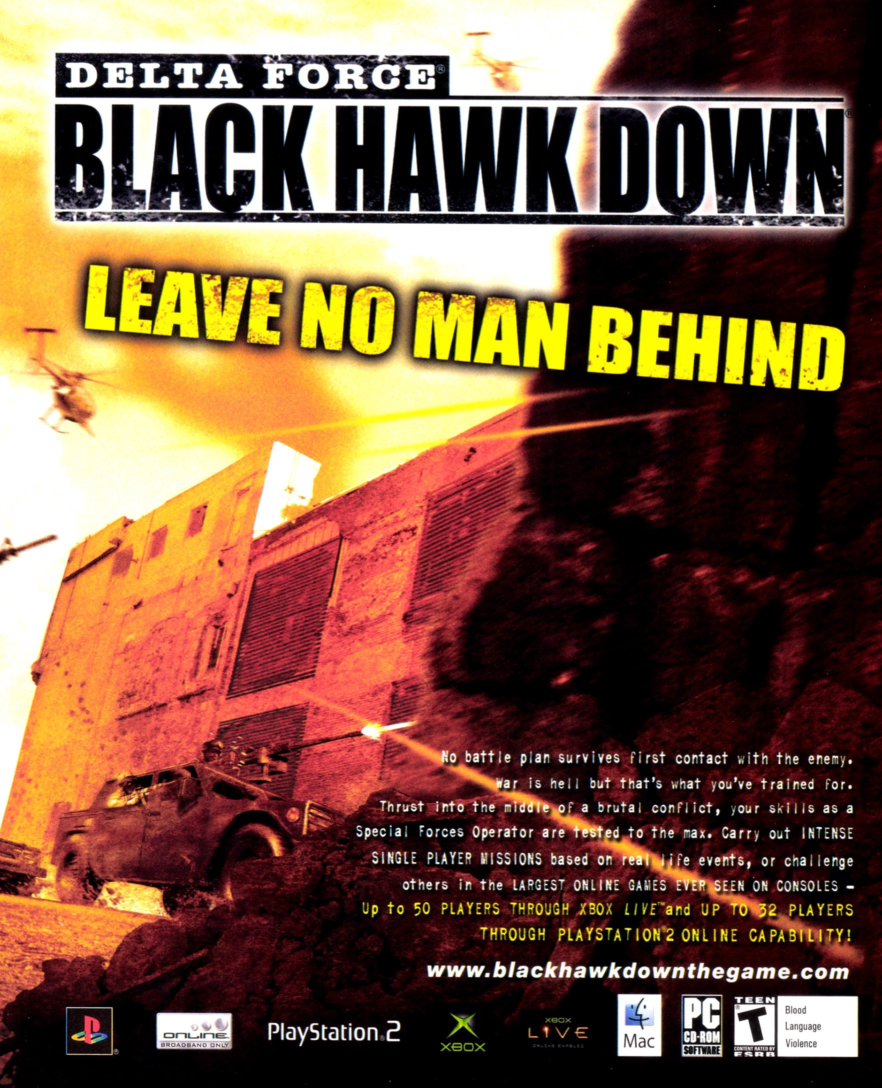

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PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

TEEN

T

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

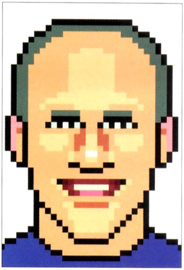
Blood
Language
Violence

THE POWER 20

It might be hard to believe, but actual real-live people are behind the consoles and games you play every day. From company executives to designers, they affect your gaming world through the decisions they make concerning technology, stories, characters, and just smart business. We couldn't do without them, and neither could you. Here, in no particular order, are *OPM*'s picks for 2005's PlayStation people who will have the greatest impact on the most important people in PlayStation gaming: you.

Illustrations by eBoy

"THE BEAUTY OF GAMES IS THAT THEY ARE NOT A FIXED MEDIUM."



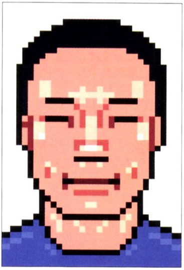
DAVID DEMARTINI

DIGITAL MOBSTER

WHO IS HE? He's the executive producer of EA's upcoming *Godfather* game.

OH YEAH, THOSE MAFIA MOVIES. EA's pulling out all the stops for this game, even ponying up the cash so it can use the voice talents of major actors from the films, including Marlon Brando, James Caan, and Robert De Niro. A nice piece of irony: *The Godfather* trilogy could legitimately be argued to be the father of controversial videogame heavyweights such as the *Grand Theft Auto* series, and now the *Godfather* game will be in direct competition with them.

IF WE REFUSE? This game has already generated its share of controversy, and its success or failure will affect much more than just EA's bottom line. This game is expected to be a blockbuster: If it succeeds, it could mean the few remaining small publishers will be in jeopardy, as they'll have a hard time funding games that require that fat of a bankroll. *The Godfather*'s success will also mean gamers can count on a lot more games based on licenses of classic movies.



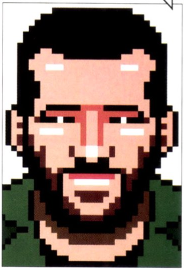
KAZUNORI YAMAUCHI

MR. GRAN TURISMO

WHO IS HE? He's the creator of *Gran Turismo* and president of Polyphony Digital.

CAN HE KEEP THE LEAD? Yamauchi has done for racing games what EA has done for football games. The *Gran Turismo* series has grown so much over the past few years that it's become a staple of the automotive lifestyle. Car enthusiast magazines devote large amounts of coverage to it, and auto manufacturers actively pursue Yamauchi and the team to get their cars in *Gran Turismo* games. But with the release of the fourth game, there are a lot of questions up in the air, specifically revolving around the lack of online play—which looks like it may not be coming at all.

WHAT'S HE DOING INSTEAD? There's the PSP *Gran Turismo* game, and after seeing what Polyphony can do with aging PlayStation 2 hardware, we're excited to see what it does with Sony's portable system. Still, Polyphony needs to keep an eye on its rearview mirror, with games like the *Need for Speed* series coming up that could potentially take the racing crown.



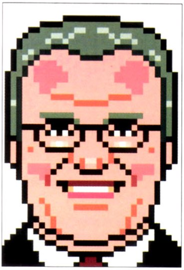
SAM HOUSER

THE ROCKSTAR

WHO IS HE? He's the brains behind *Grand Theft Auto* and the president of Rockstar.

AH, THE ORIGINAL GANGSTER. It's not easy being the driving force behind one of the most popular series of games ever created. The amount of pressure to keep it fresh and entertaining, especially with all of the me-too games out there, is enough to drive anyone insane. But Houser and his group have been able to keep *Grand Theft Auto* at the top of its game by focusing on different themes for each installment and keeping the story entertaining enough to keep the experience of jacking cars and shooting an assortment of lowly individuals interesting.

WHAT'S NEXT? Well, there's a PSP version of *Grand Theft Auto* coming out this fall, which will mark the first time the series has had the ability to replicate the console experience on the small screen. And it's a given that the next console *GTA* will show up on next-gen consoles. For the moment, details surrounding both games are a closely guarded secret.



SIR HOWARD STRINGER

SONY'S BOSS

WHO IS HE? He's the new CEO of Sony (worldwide), the first Westerner to hold the position. Before that, he was the CEO of Sony Corporation of America.

WILL THAT AFFECT THE PLAYSTATION WORLD? It seems likely. *The New York Times* quoted Stringer as criticizing Sony managers, saying, "The business of Sony has become management, not product design." Add to that the fact that Sony's stock has been slipping due to lackluster hardware sales, and you could see big changes in the Sony infrastructure—which could affect who is involved in upcoming PlayStation decisions.

YIKES. Well, the bright spot is that gaming is where Sony's big money is—44 percent of the company's profit in the last quarter of 2004 was from videogame sales, and the PSP's initial sales forecasts are rosy. But with Microsoft and Nintendo breathing down Sony's neck with their respective next-gen consoles, plus a potentially debilitating lawsuit by Immersion Corporation over the DualShock controller (see page 26), we say good luck, Sir Howard—you may need it.

SONY

KEN KUTARAGI

PLAYSTATION'S DADDY

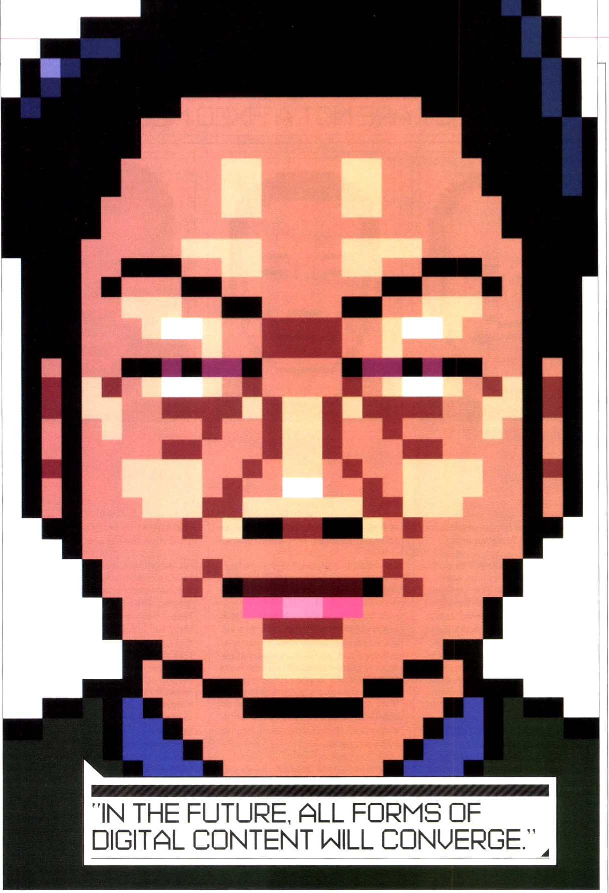
WHO IS HE? Kutaragi is the father of the PlayStation brand and the CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment.

CALL HIM MR. PLAYSTATION. With the PSP successfully out the door and into the hands of millions of drooling fans, Kutaragi can focus on his big project, which is none other than the PlayStation 3 and its Cell chip. The PlayStation has become increasingly important to Sony as its consumer electronics divisions have continued to lose money.

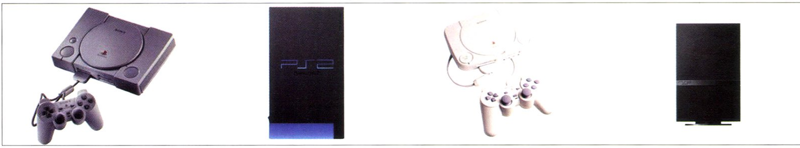
The news isn't all good, though. Kutaragi was rumored to be the choice to become the next CEO of parent company Sony Corporation. In early March, however, it was announced that Sony's board of directors had appointed Sir Howard Stringer, who was the CEO of Sony Corporation of America (see page 69), to the position. Kutaragi was also removed from Sony Corporation's board of directors.

WHY DID HE GET PASSED OVER? Unofficial spin from Sony has been that they wanted him to focus on PlayStation 3. But it's also possible that they liked Sir Howard's extensive experience in corporate positions at other companies. Sony has recently acknowledged that its loss of market share may be due to errors in judgment, and Stringer may be more likely to make the sweeping changes necessary than Kutaragi, whose entire career has been with Sony.

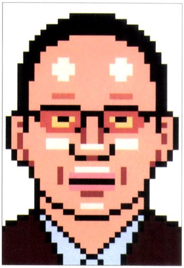
WILL HE LEAVE? No. Sir Howard has publicly praised Kutaragi for his creativity, saying in *The Wall Street Journal* that Sony has a need for his "brilliance in residence," and Kutaragi himself has said to the Japanese press that he will remain with Sony.



"IN THE FUTURE, ALL FORMS OF DIGITAL CONTENT WILL CONVERGE."



"I'VE MADE UP STUFF THAT'S TURNED OUT TO BE REAL."



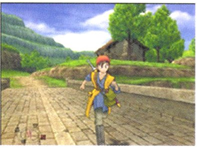
YUJI HORII

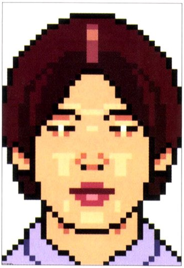
KING OF RPGS

WHO IS HE? He's a producer at Square Enix.

WHY DOES HE MATTER? He only happens to be the main man behind Squenix's biggest franchise. No, not *Final Fantasy*, but *Dragon Quest*. As huge as *Final Fantasy* is, it didn't cause the Japanese Diet (Japan's legislative body) to pass a law forbidding it to be released on a weekday (since kids would skip class to buy *Dragon Quest* games). In fact, the *Dragon Quest* series has outperformed both *Final Fantasy* and *Kingdom Hearts* on sales charts in Japan.

WOW. Yeah. Whether it's the ingenious use of Level-5 to produce a lush graphical update to the franchise or providing the same mix of old-school yet deep RPG mechanics, Horii's work on *Dragon Quest VIII* is solid evidence that he knows RPGs. With the sequels to those other franchises caught in a variety of delays, Horii's title could end up being the Squenix bright spot this year. And this time Americans might finally figure out just how important he is to the RPG landscape.





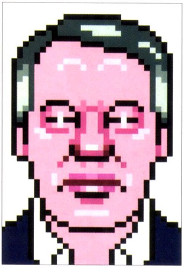
TETSUYA NOMURA

THE ARTIST

WHO IS HE? He's the director of *Kingdom Hearts II* and an all-around drawing guy.

SO WHAT'S HIS DEAL? Nomura is one of the most important visual artists in the industry today, thanks to his work as the character designer for most of Square Enix's titles, as the director of *Kingdom Hearts*, and for his contributions to several current projects, including *Kingdom Hearts II*, *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*, and *Final Fantasy VII: Dirge of Cerberus* (along with a bunch of other unannounced games). And you have to admire a guy who's made multiple belt buckles a fashionable trend for videogame characters.

WHAT'S UP WITH KINGDOM HEARTS II? Squenix wouldn't officially comment, but word is that Nomura suffered a supernasty flu last year, which was one reason for the big delay. Squenix is probably going to make an official announcement to elaborate on *Kingdom Heart II*'s "TBD" release date, but our guess is it's coming in either right at the end of the year or possibly even early next year.

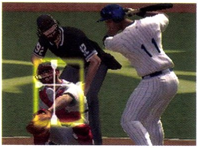


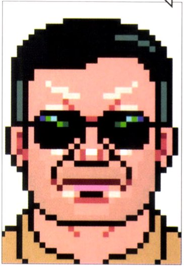
PAUL EIBELER

EA'S CHALLENGER

WHO IS HE? He's the president of Take-Two Interactive.

CAN HE DO IT? Eibeler and Take-Two have one very clear goal in mind—to overtake Electronic Arts as the leading third-party publisher in the world. It's no small task to be sure. Even though the company has the highest-selling console series (*Grand Theft Auto*) as its foundation, Eibeler knows that it needs to crack the sports market in order to achieve that position. That's why the company bought Visual Concepts from Sega as well as other developers to help bolster its sports development roster. Take-Two has since gone on to make an aggressive deal with Major League Baseball, which bars any other third-party publisher from making a licensed baseball game, and its agreement with the NBA ensures that the popular *2K* series of basketball games will continue for years to come. Of course, there still remains the issue of football, arguably the most popular of the three main sports, but Eibeler and Visual Concepts undoubtedly have something up their sleeves to combat EA's exclusive NFL license.





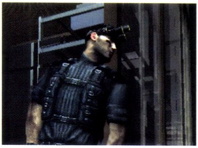
TOM CLANCY

GENERAL OF WAR

WHO IS HE? The best-selling author of political techno-thrillers like *Patriot Games* and *The Hunt for Red October*. You might also have noticed his name preceding the titles of games like *Splinter Cell*, *Ghost Recon*, and *Rainbow Six*.

BUT IS HE REALLY INVOLVED IN THE GAMES? According to Ubisoft, Clancy and his team work closely with the developers to create the concepts and story lines, and they continue to evaluate games throughout the development process. Plus, all three console-based *Clancy* series have proven to be extremely innovative in areas of tactical play, realism, and, especially, multiplayer competition. *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, in particular, shook up online multiplayer in a big way.

IS IT REALLY THAT BIG OF A DEAL? The *Splinter Cell* franchise has sold over 3 million copies, and the *Clancy* games as a group generated nearly $400 million in sales for Ubisoft to date. He may not be single-handedly keeping Ubisoft afloat, but his properties contribute a huge chunk to the company's bottom line.



"WE'RE ALWAYS JUST TRYING TO MOVE THE EXPERIENCE FORWARD."

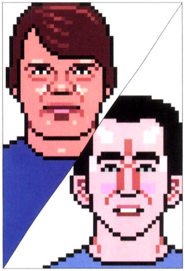
MASA CHATANI

PSP'S CREATOR

WHO IS HE? The chief technology officer at Sony Computer Entertainment and the designer of the PSP you're probably holding right now.

WHAT CAN'T IT DO? The PSP is an amazing little piece of hardware. From its huge screen to its multimedia capabilities, it includes just about everything you could want in a portable entertainment product, and you can thank Chatani for that. He, along with Kutaragi and other technical team members, helped make the PSP not only a serious contender to the throne of the handheld gaming market, but also a threat in the digital-music arena. It may not be able to take on Apple's iPod directly, but how can you resist the appeal of a device that plays games, movies, and music, as opposed to something that costs just as much (or more) and plays only music?

YEAH, IT'S PRETTY COOL. The PSP hasn't been a tough sell so far, which is good news for Sony's electronics division. You can plan on seeing a lot more of this sexy device, since it could be what turns Sony's hardware sales back around.



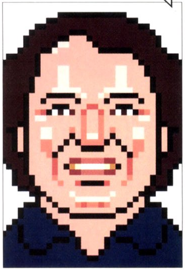
EVAN WELLS & STEPHEN WHITE

TECHNOLOGY PUSHERS

WHO ARE THEY? The new copresidents of Sony studio Naughty Dog, who you may remember from such series as *Crash Bandicoot* and *Jak and Daxter*. They took over management of the studio following the much-talked-about departure of cofounder Jason Rubin.

BUT I DON'T PLAY PLATFORMERS. It doesn't matter. While Naughty Dog is known for making great games that platform fans love, they are equally known for the technology that goes into those games—perhaps even more so. *Crash* did things with the PS1 that no one thought possible. The first *Jak and Daxter* introduced a huge, beautiful, seamless game world that simply rocked the PS2 development scene.

WHAT ARE THEY WORKING ON NOW? Right now, they're working on *Jak X*, a racing game based in the *Jak* universe, but if history is any indicator, this is merely a stopgap game to tide fans over while the studio devotes most of its effort to a next-generation product. The smart money is on Naughty Dog being on the vanguard of PS3 technology.



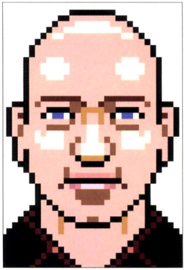
SETH LUISI

PS2'S ONLINE LIASON

WHO IS HE? The senior producer for the *SOCOM* series, Luisi worked with developer Zipper Interactive and the U.S. Navy to create a game that was both representative of the SEAL experience and a hell of a good time to play. Realism and fun are not an easy mix.

IS THAT A BIG DEAL? Not in itself, perhaps, but the series has a broader legacy: *SOCOM* launched the PS2's online initiative pretty much singlehandedly and continues to carry it to this day. Over a year and a half since its release, *SOCOM II* still logs 30,000 players a day—roughly the same as when it launched. In other words, *SOCOM* is the online powerhouse, a trend that is only going to continue with the release of *SOCOM 3* this fall.

WHAT'S NEXT? Rumors are already circulating about a PSP version, and it's a virtual certainty that we'll see the game very early on the next-generation PlayStation. For now, though, the focus is squarely on *SOCOM 3*. Look for an exclusive report on the game's online options next month in *OPM*.



J ALLARD

THE ONLINE THREAT

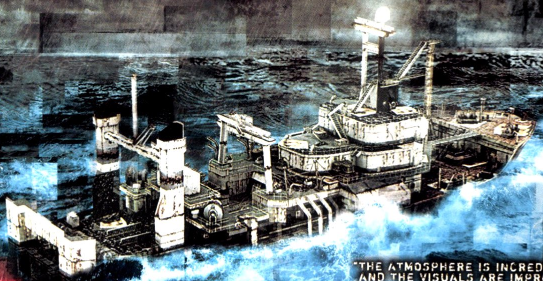
WHO IS HE? A founding member of the original Xbox team, Allard is the guy in charge of the next-gen Xbox.

UHH...ISN'T THIS ABOUT PLAYSTATION? Sony has soundly beaten Microsoft in total units sold for the current generation of consoles, but even die-hard PlayStation fans will admit that Xbox Live kicked the pants off PlayStation's online service. Sony has further let down connected gamers by removing promised online options from recent games, including *Gran Turismo 4*.

While details on the next generation of consoles are still sketchy, Microsoft has announced that all games for the next-gen Xbox must be Live aware, and the company continues to encourage developers to include online play.

CAN SONY CATCH UP? While less than 5 percent of U.S. households had broadband in 2000, that figure is expected to top 56 percent by 2008. Online access will certainly be one of the major influences as people pick their systems; to be successful, Sony needs to figure out how to beat Microsoft at its own game.

ON A HELLBOUND VESSEL, EVERYONE IS DEAD WEIGHT.



"THE ATMOSPHERE IS INCREDIBLE AND THE VISUALS ARE IMPRESSIVE."
GAME INFORMER

"A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOR FANS OF SURVIVAL HORROR."
OPM

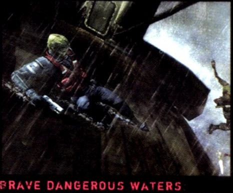
COLD FEAR™

KEEP YOUR BEARINGS
BATTLE AGAINST INCREASINGLY MUTATED ENEMIES IN TREACHEROUS, UNSTABLE ENVIRONMENTS.

PlayStation®2 screenshot shown

UNLEASH A TORRENT OF WEAPONS
CREATE FATAL TRAPS AND USE SHOTGUNS, FLAME THROWERS, OR ANY OBJECT YOU CAN FIND TO SURVIVE.

Xbox® screenshot shown



BRAVE DANGEROUS WATERS
ROCKED BY HUGE BREAKERS, YOU MUST STEADY YOUR NERVES – AND AIM – TO EVADE A WATERY GRAVE.

PlayStation®2 screenshot shown

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Language

PlayStation 2

DARKWORKS

UBISOFT

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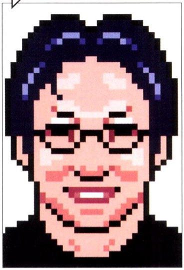
"A POPULAR CHARACTER WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SEQUELS."

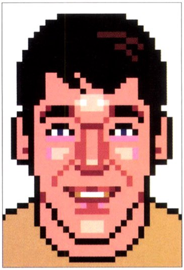


HIDEO KOJIMA
METAL GEAR MAVEN

WHO IS HE? He's the director of the *Metal Gear Solid* franchise.

WHY DOES HE MATTER? His drive to meld movies and games is still a big influence on game designers today. Even if you can't stand his oddball story lines, you have to admire how he fuses stories with fine-tuned stealth-action gameplay—and his drive to do weird and new things, such as design games you have to play in the sun (the *Boktai* franchise). Even outside of game design, Kojima's team at Konami demonstrates how powerful the PS2 is, as they can push the system to generate some of its best visuals. Kojima recently announced that there will be an *MGS4* and that it will be for next-generation systems—he also added the amusing tag line "No place to hide, no place for Hideo!"

IS HE REALLY NOT DOING MGS4? Well, he will still be the executive producer, but he claims to be handing director duties to someone else. Then again, he said the same thing about *MGS3*, and look what happened there. He hasn't commented on any other projects yet.

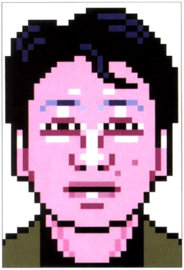


TED PRICE
THE INDEPENDENT

WHO IS HE? He's president, CEO, and cofounder of Insomniac Games, developer of the *Spyro the Dragon* and *Ratchet & Clank* series. Insomniac is currently working on *Ratchet: Deadlocked*, a "more sophisticated" interpretation of the series.

WHICH PUBLISHER OWNS INSOMNIAC? That's the thing: none of them. Insomniac is one of a dwindling number of fully independent studios in this cutthroat world of videogame design, and judging from Price's past comments, he fully intends to keep it that way. This allows the studio to make quirky, interesting games that haven't been focus-grouped to death, a feat that's made even more impressive by the studio's top-notch technological chops.

SO WHAT WILL HE DO NEXT? As the industry continues its current trend of buyouts, mergers, and consolidations, look for Price to emerge as a cheerleader for creativity, innovation, and the independent spirit. Until then, it's a safe bet that a game from Insomniac will make an early appearance on PS3.

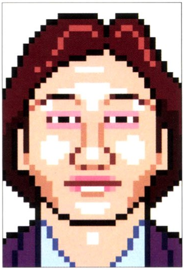


HIROYUKI KOBAYASHI
DESIGNER OF INNOVATION

WHO IS HE? He's a producer at Capcom.

WHY DOES HE MATTER? While Keiji Inafune (creator of Mega Man and producer of the *Onimusha* franchise) is a well-known Capcom producer, Kobayashi has quietly been making a name for himself, contributing to franchises such as *Resident Evil* and *Devil May Cry*. His current project is *Killer 7*, which, if nothing else, will end up being the weirdest game on the market. But the biggest reason he's on this list is because of his help in transforming *Resident Evil 4* from yet another key hunt with zombies into one of the best games of 2005. The cajones he had in totally revamping a tired franchise is something that might be reflected in more games in the coming months. He's likely to be helping *RE4* make the transition from GameCube to PS2, and he's worth watching simply because he's unafraid to be bold and daring in game design.

WILL THERE BE MORE ZOMBIES? For him, yes, as he's confirmed to be working on *Resident Evil 5* (which, yes, will be in the style of *RE4*).

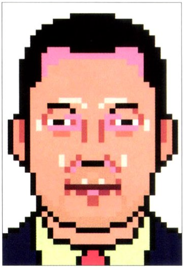


FUMITO UEDA
CHAMPION OF QUALITY

WHO IS HE? He's the product manager for *Ico* and *Wanda and the Colossus*.

ARE VIDEOGAMES ART? If you're asking that, you must not have ever seen *Ico*—because if you had, you would have difficulty saying no to that question. It wouldn't be uncommon to play the game and stand around in the same place for a few minutes just to take in the scenery, which would often evoke emotion—something games have been trying to do for years. Ueda is transferring the same kind of dynamic into the spiritual successor to *Ico*, called *Wanda and the Colossus*, which already looks spectacular.

BUT ICO DIDN'T SELL THAT MANY COPIES. The fact that *Wanda* is even happening is a testament to the impact Ueda has had on the industry. *Ico* proved that a game doesn't need to make millions in sales to be successful; the bond between player and game is ultimately more important. Fans of *Ico*, who have been demanding another project from Ueda and his team for years, are finally getting what they asked for.

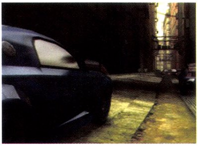


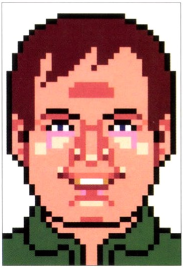
DAVID LAU-KEE
THE BACKBONE OF GAMES

WHO IS HE? He's the president of Criterion, the studio behind all things *Burnout* and *Black* and the ubiquitous RenderWare technology.

OH, THAT STUDIO THAT DESTROYS THINGS. Right—both the upcoming shooter *Black* and *Burnout 4* are known for letting you wreak havoc, whether it be with a gun or a car. But though Criterion has a healthy appetite for destruction, the studio should actually be better known for creating things.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? While middleware may not be sexy, RenderWare is extremely significant—25 percent of all videogames being made are based on Criterion's middleware programming. The company's newest extension is into the handheld space with RenderWare Mobile—games built on that technology will now make their way to the PSP, the Nintendo DS, even cell phones and PDAs. And as EA now owns Criterion (meaning any company who uses RenderWare has to pay a fee to EA), this is just another way it is cementing its position as the king of the hill.



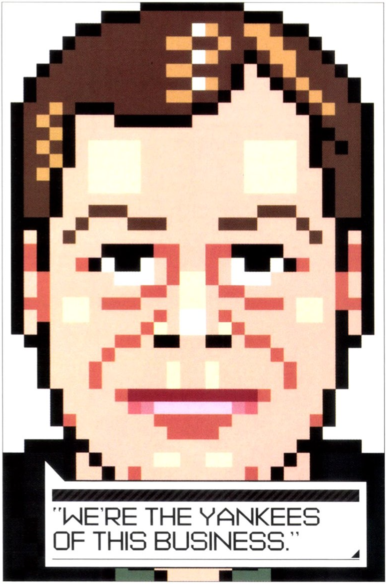


DAVID JAFFE
CREATIVE GURU

WHO IS HE? He's the guy who directed Sony's recent hit *God of War*. He was also recently named creative director of Sony's Santa Monica studios—in addition to *God of War*, they have developed the *Twisted Metal* series, *War of the Monsters*, and *Downhill Domination*.

SO WILL THERE BE A GOD OF WAR SEQUEL? No official word yet, but given the game's critical reception and early sales, we'd be shocked if there wasn't. Just don't look for Jaffe to helm the project—any involvement on his part will be purely in a supervisory capacity.

WHAT'S HE DOING THEN? Jaffe's now overseeing all the projects coming out of the Santa Monica studio. Things have been strangely silent since *God of War* came out, but rumors have started leaking—all we can say right now is that it's a safe bet at least some of the upcoming projects involve next-gen stuff. Mr. Jaffe, if you're reading this, the team at *OPM* would respectfully like to request that at least one of those secret games contains a knife-wielding octomonkey with laser eyes.


"WE'RE THE YANKEES OF THIS BUSINESS."

LARRY PROBST
THE TOP OF THE HEAP

WHO IS HE? Oh, he's only the ruler of the videogame universe, otherwise known as the CEO of Electronic Arts.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY? It'd be one thing if Electronic Arts was this massive company that relied too much on licenses and produced nothing but crap year after year, but that's not really what EA is about. Though sales of its games have been down in recent months, the company continues to lead by example by producing games that are still better than a vast majority of what appears on store shelves. Plus, its sports games simply aren't matched in terms of popularity and, in the view of some, quality. In fact, EA's sports games are one of the major reasons people buy a broadband adapter for the PS2, and Sony should be thanking EA for that. But when it comes down to it, all of this is possible because Probst just makes smart business moves.

HOW DOES HE DO IT? The acquisition of development houses such as Criterion gives EA access to an unprecedented level of talent that most companies could only dream of having. The purchase of key licenses hasn't hurt either. EA doesn't hesitate when it comes to snagging movie licenses, and because of that, many of its games receive instant attention from consumers—how could any *Lord of the Rings* fan resist the chance to participate in the quest to bring the Ring to Mt. Doom? Who wouldn't want to rid Gotham City of vile criminals? Even with its original properties, EA manages to capitalize on popular culture, much like it did with the *Need for Speed Underground* series, which has been one of EA's best-sellers, thanks to the interest in car-tuner culture. Say what you will about EA, but there's no denying that it got where it is because of Probst's ability to read the market and make moves accordingly. «

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IT'S HOW YOU DRIVE
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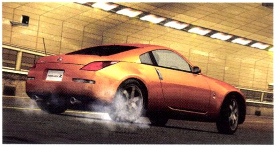

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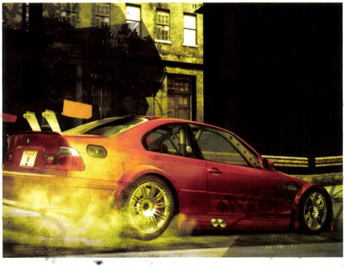
GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN'

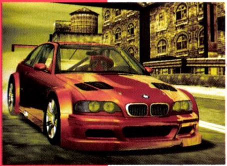
NEED FOR SPEED LEAVES THE UNDERGROUND

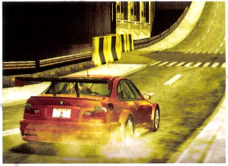
by Giancarlo Varanini

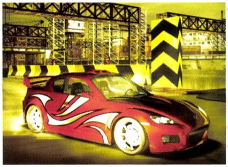
Who would've thought that a racing game that first debuted on the ill-fated 3DO console would mark the beginning of not only a 10-year-old franchise, but also one of gaming's best-known and best-selling franchises? Looking back, it's not hard to decipher why *Need for Speed* has seen so much success. EA has kept the series fresh over the years by introducing new types of racing experiences, whether they're out in the country with top-of-the-line vehicles or on city streets with tuners. The series has offered something for almost every type of racing fan.

But with the immense popularity of the *Underground* games, you might think that the next game would simply take you back to the previous game's neon-glazed city streets. Well, you'd be wrong, and you might be surprised to find that EA's taking a page out of its own history book.









PEDIGREE
What do you think of when *Metroid Prime* and *SSX* pop into your head? Probably not racing games, but the development team at EA Canada has a wealth of experience that gives them an idea of what makes a really good game.

TEAM MOST WANTED, ASSEMBLE!

THE CREATIVE FORCE BEHIND THE NEW NEED FOR SPEED

The Electronic Arts offices in Vancouver, British Columbia, tower above the city's streets and overlook an enormous snowcapped mountain range. It's a direct contrast to the urban and generally gritty feel of the latest *Need for Speed* game, aptly dubbed *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*. But despite what may seem like an incompatibility in settings, it's actually a perfect place to continue the *Need for Speed* lineage. "The group here specializes in driving games," says Larry LaPierre, senior producer on *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*. "There are members from the original *Need for Speed* team here combined with some new blood. Also, we get to partner with some of the *Burnout* guys, so we get a fresh perspective on attacking the same problems."

Indeed, the amount of talent working on the game is impressive, especially since some members of the *Most Wanted* development team have worked on not only the most popular EA franchises, but also well-known series from other companies. It's these experiences with a wide variety of games that help fuel the team's passion for coming up with new ideas. "My experience goes back to the *SSX* franchise with *SSX Tricky* and *SSX 3*," says LaPierre. "The first thing I wanted to do with [*Most Wanted*] was to get the cars up and twisting in the air. [*Laughs*] The more that you can apply to different genres and different games—we've found that it lets us create fresher experiences."

For Michael Mann, the game's producer, going from a relatively small studio like Retro (the studio responsible for *Metroid Prime*) to Electronic Arts didn't necessarily present that many problems. "The size of the team is a little bit larger," he says. "The Retro team was a very dedicated and passionate group of individuals, but it's the same thing here. Really, there's the same belief to make the best game possible here, and that's what attracted me to [EA Canada]—its passion for games and the designers."

But don't get the wrong idea. The *Most Wanted* development team also has a strong background in racing. "There's certainly a strong knowledge base on driving here," Mann adds. "We've had the same executive producer [Chuck Osieja] from the beginning of *Need for Speed*. Some of the other individuals have been working on *Need for Speed* for eight or nine years, so we definitely have the knowledge. A lot of people are also passionate about cars. They go to car shows during the weekend, and they're just entrenched in the industry. One guy has even won awards for tuning his car out."

Once the team was assembled, it was time to flesh out the ideas for a new *Need for Speed*. The process was fairly streamlined, with the team wanting to take the next logical step with the *Need for Speed* series, but they also wanted to avoid alienating pre-existing fans. The solution—take parts of one of the most popular *Need for Speed* games (*Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2*) and throw in elements that have made the recent games popular. "A couple of years ago, we wanted to evolve the franchise," says Mann. "So we looked at the good and bad of *Hot Pursuit 2*. We looked at the immersion of *Underground 2*, the open-world aspects, and how we could build and improve on that."

Of course, an easier way to create the next *Need for Speed* game would've been to just make another entry in the *Underground* series, but the development team is very cognizant of *Need for Speed*'s roots and understands why the series has been around as long as it has. "If you were given a blank slate and given the opportunity to put together parts from the best experiences of what a *Need for Speed* game can deliver—that's what we're doing," says LaPierre. "We looked at everything that people like about the games, like street racing and customization. And we also looked at the consequences of introducing pursuit and evasion game mechanics. Still, we haven't had [too many] legacy issues to deal with because we just want to create the best game possible."

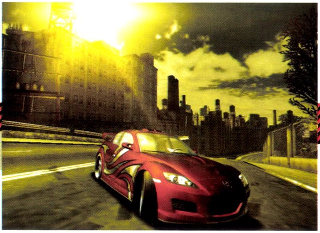
"YOU HAVE TO FOCUS ON A NEW DIRECTION."

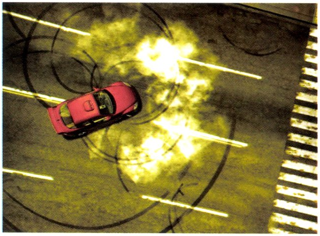
But even while relying on some of *Underground*'s gameplay mechanics, such as different street-racing types and customization, *Most Wanted* is facing an uphill battle. Many gamers' first *Need for Speed* experiences were with the *Underground* games, so the development team has to perform a bit of a balancing act.

"You're always faced with certain amounts of problems following anything that's successful when you want to make it too much like it or not enough like it," says LaPierre "The most important thing—and we see this in so many game sequels—is that you have to focus on a new direction. If it's new and fresh but its foundational elements are familiar, then you've got something that people will be excited about. Regardless of their initial impressions, they'll get over it because word of mouth will overcome that."

RIDING IN STYLE

CHANGING THE FACE OF THE RACE





The first thing you'll notice about *Need for Speed: Most Wanted* is the distinct lack of wet, neon streets and a night sky. Obviously, the team wanted to go in a different direction in terms of *Most Wanted*'s style, aiming for a grittier urban look. "Whether it's a concrete structure, graffiti on a building, or garbage on the ground—there's a level of browning involved because sometimes environments can look a little too pretty or a little too country road," says Eduardo Agostini, *Most Wanted*'s world art director. "We're definitely going for a sense that someone just walked through the environment and did something, so it's not just car traffic."

Since *Most Wanted* takes place underneath the rays of the sun, you can see much more detail in the environments, which presented the team with the potential problem of having to squeeze a little more power out of the PlayStation 2 hardware. "Actually, it makes stuff like lighting much easier than doing lighting at night," says Russell Rice, the game's technical art director. "Many other details, like proper shadowing—that's where the problems come [from]. At the same time, it adds a completely different flavor and perspective." There's also an issue with attempting to replicate the incredible cinematic feel of the *Underground* games, something that might not be as easy to accomplish with a game like *Most Wanted*, but the team has a few tricks up its sleeve. "You will never see raw footage from a movie up on the screen," Rice adds. "So we generate raw footage, but it's the layers of effects that enable us [to give it a certain look]."

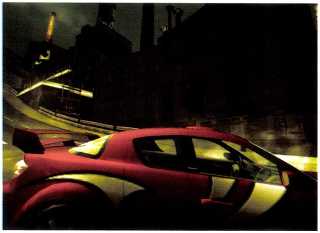
Either way, they aren't going for a standard look. The team wants *Most Wanted* to have its own distinct style. "Saturated colors suggest an arcade racer," Agostini says. "We're not going over the top with color filters to give it a more cinematic feel." Nor does the team want to make it seem too realistic. "We don't want to make it look like *Gran Turismo*; we're going for more of a movie look," Rice responds. "Something like *Gran Turismo* looks like how you would see it with your eye, whereas in a movie, you're going to see stuff layered over the top that brings out the art."

Beyond just the general look of the game, the art team for *Most Wanted* wants you to have a reaction to what you see in the game. They want you to feel the pressure of escaping the police as you zoom through different zones at top speed. "In *Hot Pursuit*, we first realized that we wanted to get that feeling where a cop pulls up behind you—whether you've done anything or not—and you get the sweaty palms," Rice explains. "At that moment, we decided that the next time we have a game where there are pursuits involved, we have to try to figure out how to tap that emotion, whether it's through the joystick or if it's visual or auditory—whatever we can do. During the course of *Underground*, we developed a bunch of things that revolved around that, but it didn't involve pursuits. Now that we're back to pursuits, we've really been able to work on that aspect."

The design process for creating that kind of situation goes back to the level design. In order to help execute it, *Most Wanted* has been designed to be "claustrophobic" so that you feel the pressure of racing against other cars or away from the cops. But it all starts with a far more basic idea. "We sit together and figure out what we want to build for our world," says Rice. "If they want a city, then we talk about what kind of city. The design aspect requires details like an East Coast or West Coast city, then we sit down and figure out what that is." Plus, there was plenty of research involved just to make sure that the game accurately portrayed various types of landscapes. "On this project, we wanted to differentiate ourselves from *Underground* because it's a West Coast–flavor game," says Agostini. "The original idea was to go East Coast and do New England meets New York. We gathered as much reference imagery as possible, looked at movies, and just started gathering the best of the best. We then put it in there for the artists to look [at] and to see what areas they were interested in so they could go out and collect even more reference material."

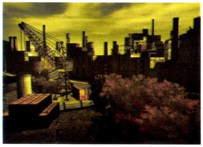
Interestingly, another crucial aspect of *Most Wanted* is its interactive world. While *Underground* features detailed environments, they are mostly just static streets with very little interaction between the cars and the objects in the environment. In *Most Wanted*, there will be far more, not only with simple objects strewn about the environment, but with the environment itself. "We have people coming up with epic pursuits and over-the-top moments, so we have people constantly brainstorming," says Agostini. "We want to have things that you're smashing through or jumping over, so we plot them throughout the world and pace them accordingly so people can hit these things every so often and feel like they're being notorious."

MOST WANTED HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO BE "CLAUSTROPHOBIC."



TWO ROADS

Eduardo Agostini has previous experience on the *Need for Speed* series but briefly left to work on the racing sequences in *007: Everything or Nothing*. Rice's background includes a stint at BioWare during its early days; he worked on the company's highly regarded RPGs.



REV YOUR ENGINE

THE SOUND OF SPEED

As you might expect, the sound designer for a film like *The Fast and the Furious* knows what he's doing when it comes to recording car audio for a game. Charles Deenen's experience in the film industry has brought a fresh perspective to the world of gaming for quite some time, most notably with the *Need for Speed Underground* series, and now he's bringing his expertise to *Most Wanted* as senior audio director. However, the transition from movies to games isn't all that easy. "It's very different," says Deenen. "In film, you always have the stuff prefilmed and you know exactly what will happen, but in games, you never know what the user will do. It's a lot harder to anticipate every movement—in 10 years, you might see games that can pre-anticipate what the user is going to do."

Then there are the technical limitations. Of course, with movies, you don't have to worry about how much sound you can load into RAM, but the PS2 is an entirely different story. "On the PS2, you have to cram everything into a space that amounts to one-and-a-half minutes of sound. What we usually do is see what a game looks like, see how it moves, and see how it drives. Then we'll record a piece to video and post it as if it were a film. Then we see what works and what didn't work. Then we examine what we can do to make it better, and once we know what we want to do, we go out and record or mix source from scratch."

Other similarities between creating sound for films and games include the actual process. Much as they would do on a film, Deenen's team goes straight to the source to get the best possible sounds for the cars in the game. "We go to the streets," says Deenen, "where we mount microphones in the back and front in the engine compartment. Then we make something called a steady sound where we try to make loops [of sound] that will fit into memory." But, as Deenen points out, it's not always as simple as just sticking a mic inside the car. "Some of the mistakes we used to make involved recording a car in a vacuum," he says. "It makes it sound much bigger and better if you're recording in a space where there are walls and other things. So, to record in a controlled environment is key."

And it's these sounds that will help drive the thrill of being pursued by the cops. George Lucas once said that movies are 50 percent visual and 50 percent audio, meaning that sound is as important as anything you see onscreen. With that in mind, Deenen plans to highlight various sounds to help get your blood rushing when the sirens and flashing lights are on your tail. Deenen explains: "If we want to draw attention to a cop, then we focus on those sounds instead of just trying to play them all at once. [There's a temptation] to play every single sound you have at once, and a problem with games is that there's no focus on a certain sound."

The experience of working on the *Underground* games has streamlined the process as well. "We started it in *Underground 2,* where we tried to focus on each sound at once instead of trying to play music, add wind, or other cars," says Deenen. "We just tried to focus on what was needed for the moment."

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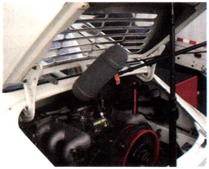
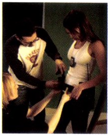
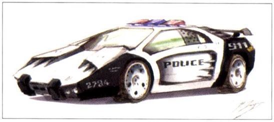
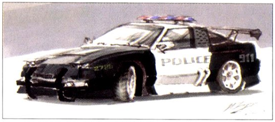
"A PROBLEM WITH GAMES IS THAT THERE'S NO FOCUS ON A CERTAIN SOUND."

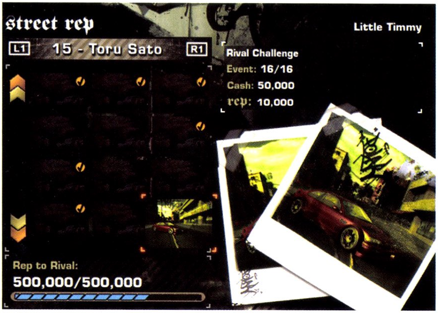




THERE'S A HUGE FOCUS ON TRADITIONAL STREET RACING, TOO.







street rep

L1 15 - Toru Sato R1

Little Timmy

Rival Challenge
Event: 16/16
Cash: 50,000
rep: 10,000

Rep to Rival:
500,000/500,000

ONLINE

You bet. You can expect *Most Wanted* to have online features similar to those found in *Underground 2*, but EA doesn't want to release all the details quite yet.

BURN RUBBER

BECOME THE MOST NOTORIOUS DRIVER

Pursuits aren't anything new to the *Need for Speed* series. Two previous games, *Hot Pursuit* and *Hot Pursuit 2*, both focused on the thrill of running from the cops in a high-performance vehicle, but *Most Wanted* takes the idea in a somewhat different direction. The whole idea is to build up as much street cred as possible, which involves racing against a variety of opponents in races similar to those found in the *Underground* games. Of course, in the process of doing this, you attract the unwanted attention of the local police force, which would like nothing better than to take you down.

And they'll try everything. One of the most important features in *Most Wanted* is the AI for the police. In older pursuit games, the police would normally just bump you in order to take you off the road, but in *Most Wanted*, they use just about every single tactic in the book, including a technique known as boxing in. Up to three police cars will attempt to trap you inside of a box in the hope that it will either slow you down or put you out of commission completely. While we didn't actually get to see any tactics other than this one, the development team assures us that there will be a reason you start to sweat a little when you hear those sirens coming up behind you. Additionally, as you progress through the game, you build up your heat meter, which is essentially an indication of how badly the cops would like to get their hands on you. There are a number of methods for lowering your heat meter, like heavily customizing your car to the point that it wouldn't be recognized by the fuzz.

But it's not all about the police. As previously mentioned, there's a huge focus on traditional street racing, too. The street-racing events are still in the design process at the moment, but if you liked the type of racing found in the *Underground* games, then chances are, you'll have no problem picking up *Most Wanted* and getting right into a race. Plus, if you're a fan of the customization options in *Underground*, you'll be pleased to know that *Most Wanted* will offer similar choices, but this time they will have a larger gameplay role.

Unfortunately, it's too early to really tell how the latest *Need for Speed* is going to turn out. Sure, the idea of mixing the *Hot Pursuit* and *Underground* racing formulas is an intriguing one. Also, EA has already started addressing concerns fans had with *Underground 2*, namely the single large, open world, which has been somewhat tossed out the window for *Most Wanted* in favor of a world that's more sectional. In any case, fans of the series have something to be excited about as game features solidify and additional information is released in the months leading up to *Most Wanted*'s November release. «

GLADIUS
PlayStation 2
XBOX
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
ESPN

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?

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LAP
1 OF 8
POS
3 OF 8
0:42:2
LAST 1:25:12
BEST 1:13:44

REVIEWS

96>

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
[★]
GAME OF THE MONTH

WIPEOUT PURE

PURELY CONTAGIOUS

RATING KEY
Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well…at least they're fun to rip apart.

[●●●●●]

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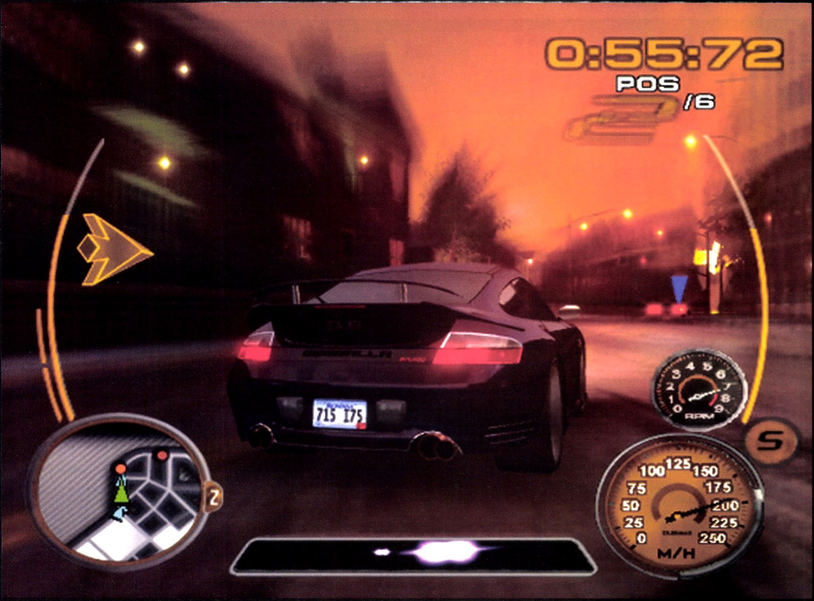


MIDNIGHT CLUB 3:

A TUNER FAN'S DREAM

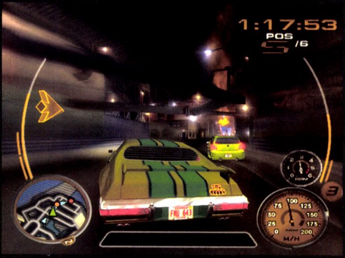
There's an obvious glut of street-racing games on store shelves, and while *Midnight Club 3* might initially seem like a shallow attempt to capitalize on the increasing popularity of the tuner market, it actually isn't. In fact, *Midnight Club 3* does a decent job of straddling the line between over-the-top arcade street racing and simulation.

Midnight Club 3 gives you high-speed races through the streets of three different cities that involve lots of collisions, huge jumps, and insane shortcuts as well as traditional skill-based races. The game's vehicle selection is similarly well balanced. Each type of car has physics that are grounded in real life. SUVs are slower, hulking beasts that can take a serious beating, while sports cars are faster but can't absorb quite as much damage. At the same time, everything is balanced enough so that no single car will have a huge advantage during a race, unless you haven't been taking the time to upgrade your ride.

And it's the upgrading that really takes the spotlight. The garage feature in *Midnight Club 3* offers so many different customization and tuning options that it could've easily been its own car customization game. While you won't spend a ton of time in there initially (for the simple reason that you just won't have the funds), you will once you have earned more money and unlocked additional items to customize your ride. Indeed, you might even find yourself spending dozens of minutes just looking for the right paint job or spoiler for your car—and that's not even taking into consideration choosing performance upgrades, which also occupies a good portion of your time. There's just a very addictive element to this, and the game does a great job of making sure that your customization efforts don't go unnoticed.

This is especially true for the online portion of the game. Racing online against other people gives you an opportunity to not only show off your car, but also check out the modifications other players have made to their vehicles. It's not unlike playing an MMORPG and finding some armor that you can't wait to show off to other people in the game. More importantly, the online modes are well executed. Straight-up racing is still a little more fun than any of the other options offered because it gives you a chance to really test your car's performance, but the other modes, such as capture the flag, offer a nice diversion to standard racing—even if you get your fill of them rather quickly. Then there are the power-ups. Much like in *Mario*

ESCALADE EXT
M/H



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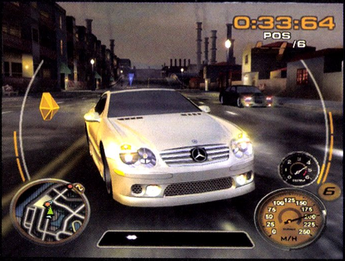

There's a strong emphasis on speed in *Midnight Club 3*. You have not only nitro, but also slipstream turbo, with which you draft behind an opponent's car until you fill up the turbo meter—then you can blow right by him, but you have to be really careful. Moving at high speeds is not always the best option, particularly if you're in a part of the city that requires you to make a few sharp turns.

DUB EDITION

Kart, these power-ups can completely change the outcome of a race, but some people may want to avoid using them altogether since they tend to make the game a little too surreal at times.

The single-player mode offers good fun as well, but navigation can still be an issue. During a race, your attention is focused on several different things at once, and it can often be difficult to gauge exactly where you're supposed to go or what the best route is. So, unless you have some kind of insane ability to see through videogame walls, chances are you're going to have to retry individual races multiple times, whether you like it or not. Yes, as you get to know the layout of a city, this becomes less of a problem, but until you reach that point, it's a major source of frustration.

Overall, *Midnight Club 3* has something to offer every kind of racing fan. Sometimes it can feel a little too over the top, particularly when power-ups and special abilities for specific cars are unlocked, such as the roar shockwave for muscle cars that pushes everyone out of the way. Yet somehow, it always manages to pull you back down to reality, whether it's inside the garage or when you're neck and neck in a race to the last checkpoint. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Fun races, excellent customization mode
CONS Feels a little too over the top sometimes, trial-and-error racing is frustrating

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar San Diego **ESRB** E10+ **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●○]

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HAUNTING GROUND

WAIT, IS IT 1996?

Haunting Ground is a bit of a head scratcher, and it's not because its puzzles are incredibly difficult to solve. For a game like this to come from the company that pioneered the survival-horror genre doesn't make sense, because *Haunting Ground* is essentially a late-'90s style survival-horror game. Most of the mechanics in the game hearken back to an era when the survival-horror formula was still in its infancy.

This becomes most apparent in the way you search for items. Sometimes you'll get the trademark shiny item, which is easy to spot in the game's environments, but often, it just takes a lot of searching of random objects. The game's puzzles are incredibly straightforward, but since *Haunting Ground* has an open-ended feel, there's a tendency to completely lose track of which item belongs to which puzzle or where you're supposed to go once you've solved one.

Haunting Ground does try a few new things, but they're not all that noteworthy. Your canine companion, who often helps you solve puzzles, is somewhat of a chore to keep track of. The panic feature, whereby the game's main character starts to frantically run around if frightened by the creatures pursuing her, is simply an extension of what Capcom introduced in *Resident Evil 3* with Nemesis, and nothing about it dramatically adds to the gameplay.

There's some inherent charm in playing a game like *Haunting Ground*, but really, it's just not a particularly interesting game in most respects. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Nice environments, controls are decent
CONS Old-style survival-horror, new ideas fall flat

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** M **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●●◐○○

Your couriers? I find this lack of respect increasingly intolerable Ms Cheng.

NARC

HOBOCOP

Booting up *Midway Arcade Treasures 2* gives one a new appreciation for the original *NARC*. There's nostalgic and goofy fun to be had in playing as heavily armed cops shooting and arresting perps, which culminates in a fight against a giant drug kingpin's head sporting mechanical legs. It's consequently amazing to see just how bad this new version of *NARC* is.

The only highlight of this miserable budget game is the odd combination of arrests and demotion. Do too many "bad cop" things (hitting civilians, taking drugs) and you eventually get demoted to beat cop and then civilian. However, the way you get back to becoming a detective and playing missions is to arrest people to boost your cop rating. This means that you, a disheveled citizen with rags and crusty facial hair, still have the power to arrest people.

The rest is just the poorest of filler. Crap aiming and a crap camera combine with boring, nonsensical missions to translate into horrid gameplay for the main story. Taking drugs is a clichéd effect—that is, you emit a mild chuckle the first time you do it but never again. The soundtrack, featuring the likes of Cypress Hill and Grandmaster Flash, grows weary and repetitive as you hear Curtis Mayfield's "Pusherman" for the 57th time. The framerate drops to the single digits when more than 20 of the same character are on your screen.

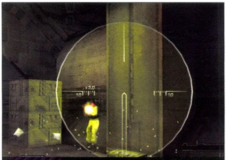
NARC just might be the ultimate antidrug message, as it basically shows us that drugs aren't cool, just stupid. « *Thierry Nguyen*

VERDICT A lead contender for the worst game of 2005. Just say no.

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Point of View **ESRB** M **MSRP** $19.99

RATING ◐○○○○

Whether it's biting social commentary on the behavior of U.S. and Chinese civilians or just a stupid game mechanic, *NARC* shows that while U.S. citizens are easy to arrest, every Chinese person will pull off slick martial arts moves.



COLD WINTER

COMING IN FROM THE COLD

Cold Winter's script is by Warren Ellis, and if you're at all intrigued by his work, he's also written a bunch of good graphic novels. We recommend *Transmetropolitan* (a journalist takes on the president), *Red* (ex-CIA killer versus the CIA itself), *Planetary* (investigation of superhero mythology), or *Global Frequency* (normal people save the world from extraordinary threats). In fact, one of the threats in *Global Frequency* is also in *Cold Winter*.

Anyone who's read about intelligence work should realize that the James Bond mystique is completely glamorized, and that intelligence work is either quite boring or quite gritty. *Cold Winter* chooses to portray the rough and dirty side of espionage—a portrayal that favors improvised weapons over fantastical gadgets, and greedy arms dealers with chemical weapons over mustache-twirlers with doomsday devices.

Cold Winter turns out to be a very solid, if slightly unremarkable, first-person shooter. It provides lots of shooting action along with a handful of interesting features and additions. You get to use lots of different guns (and explosives created by everyday objects) in a variety of decent-looking levels. The ability to pick up objects to use as shields or weapons, or knock them over to use as points of cover, is novel at first but becomes unnecessary later on. The underlying physics makes the falling and flailing of bodies more interesting and the explosions more dynamic. The multiplayer game isn't a stunning array of new modes, but a very solid implementation of traditional online shooter modes. The action is constant and solid, but never amazing nor horrid.

Cold Winter's plot is actually the interesting aspect. While you play as ex-MI6 agent Andrew Sterling in his quest to stop some arms dealer from selling the ominously named Octopus to evil terror dudes around the globe, the most fascinating plot parts are the cut-scenes that explain the history of the "Grey Wings." At first you might wonder why the heck you're learning about an old WWII veteran and his flying buddies, but as this parallel story progresses, it becomes more relevant to the Octopus story until both link together in the end. However, even with its fascinating narrative, *Cold Winter* doesn't quite elevate itself much higher than "very good shooter." Don't buy this expecting a redefinition of shooting; buy it knowing that you'll be getting a solid chunk of action high jinks, but nothing more and nothing less. « *Thierry Nguyen*

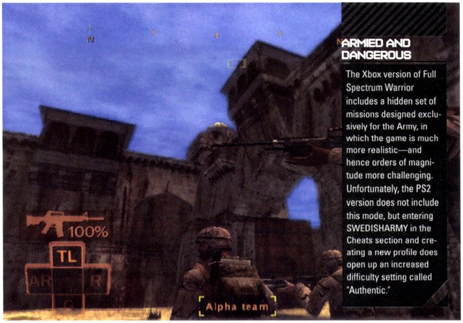
VERDICT A good spy shooter with a pretty good story. Just not excellent.

Pub. Vivendi Universal **Dev.** Swordfish **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●◐○

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

AN ARMY OF...ER...EIGHT



ARMIED AND DANGEROUS

The Xbox version of Full Spectrum Warrior includes a hidden set of missions designed exclusively for the Army, in which the game is much more realistic—and hence orders of magnitude more challenging. Unfortunately, the PS2 version does not include this mode, but entering SWEDISHARMY in the Cheats section and creating a new profile does open up an increased difficulty setting called "Authentic."

I'm fairly certain the U.S. Army does not use save points. Not having been in the Army myself, I can't be certain, but I think it stands to reason. With that exception, *Full Spectrum Warrior* is as close an experience to being in the Army as I would ever care to participate in.

This may look like a shooter from the screenshots, but in truth it's a real-time strategy game. That means you'll get through it on the strength of tactics and patience; making a move without cover or a clear exit strategy will get your ass handed to you. You will quickly learn to move only from cover to cover—stand in the open and you're dead in seconds.

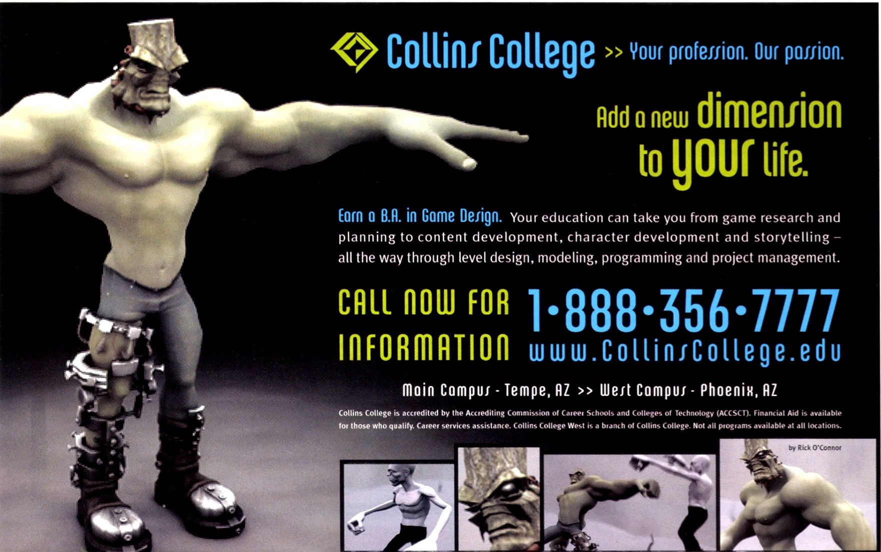
The deliberate pacing and the focus on strategy over reflexes is certainly a nice change in the war-game arena, and the graphics, voiceover, and presentation are all far above average. It's a bit unfortunate, though, that after a few missions the game starts to feel monotonous. Missions usually run as follows: Leapfrog your two squads through the level until you see an enemy. Have one squad occupy him with suppressing fire. Have the other squad flank him for a clear shot and take him out. Repeat. Now, there's definitely a certain element of tension that should keep you interested, but not as much as you'd expect in a standard RTS. And increased difficulty is more a result of a greater number of enemies and a poorer choice of cover than any real tactical challenge.

All the same, considering the PS2's woeful lack of solid strategy titles, *FSW* easily leaps to near the top of the heap, especially given its solid online co-op mode. It's a bargain at 20 bucks. « *Joe Rybicki*

PROS Innovative concept and execution, nice graphical effects, great writing
CONS Tends toward the monotonous after a while and relies a bit more on common sense than canny tactics

Pub. THQ **Dev.** Pandemic/Mass Media **ESRB** M **MSRP** $19.99

RATING [●●●●◐]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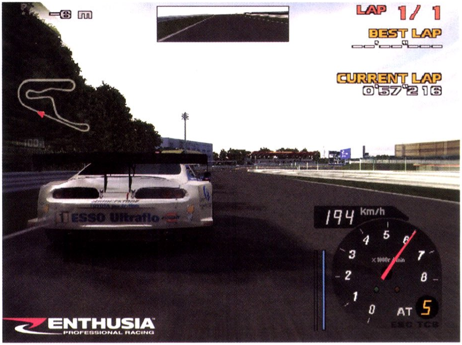
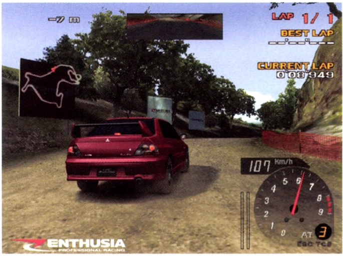
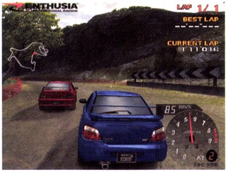
by Rick O'Connor

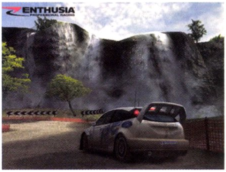
ENTHUSIA PROFESSIONAL RACING

EVERY BIT AS FUN AS DRIVING WITH YOUR HYPERSENSITIVE GRANDMOTHER









LAP 1/ 1
BEST LAP
CURRENT LAP
123 km/h
ENTHUSIA

BAD CASE OF THE SPINS

There is a tendency in *Enthusia* for high-powered cars to spin out after you simply let off the gas…or to understeer viciously after you brake before a turn. Did someone forget that slowing down transfers the weight to the front of the car, making you less likely to spin out as long as you started braking before the turn?

After playing *Enthusia* for 15 hours, I fired up *Gran Turismo 4* for a side-by-side comparison. "Surely," I thought, "I am misremembering the difficulty of the *Gran Turismo* games. Surely, driving well in *Enthusia* can't be that much more irritating than driving well in *GT*." Turns out I wasn't, and it is.

If you've ever driven a car, you can turn on *GT4* and expect to do reasonably well. Oh, you may not win every race, but you can generally expect to spend at least the majority of your time on the track.

Boot up *Enthusia*, on the other hand, and you're likely to end up doing unintentional donuts as the pack blows by you. This is not an easy game to get into. Which is not to say it's a wholly unrewarding game…as long as you're willing to put in the time and effort.

The biggest innovation—and the biggest frustration—is the use of "Enthu points" for the career mode. Think of Enthu points like hit points: If you lose them all over the course of a race (by striking other cars, hitting walls, or going off course), then you're "dead"—you have to sit out the next week of racing. This is innovative because it forces you to drive carefully; it's these points that contribute to your car's tuning level, and if you routinely lose too many in the course of racing, your car will be stuck as a level 1 crapmobile.

Only trouble is, you also lose Enthu points when other cars hit you. So you learn pretty quickly that you need to lose most of your early races. See, if you drive slowly enough, you can maintain an almost perfect line, and if you stay behind your competitors, you don't run the risk of getting hit by another driver. So your best approach is to keep losing races until you max out your car, and only then should you try to make any effort to win. If you ask me, that's just silly.

Furthermore, because of the limited tuning options, you're going to spend a lot of time switching cars; there's none of the *GT*-style process of picking a relatively mediocre car and tricking the hell out of it. If you start off with a crappy car in *Enthusia*, it's pretty much going to stay fairly crappy no matter what you do to it…so you get to experience the joy of wasting tuning points on many, many occasions.

Bottom line: *Enthusia* is one of the least user-friendly gaming experiences I've had in a long time. But that's not to say it's entirely without merit; it serves as a nice training tool for careful driving and a great purchase for anyone who thinks *Gran Turismo 4* is too easy. For the other 99.9 percent of you, though, there's nothing *Enthusia* does that *GT4* doesn't do orders of magnitude better. « *Joe Rybicki*

PASSES Ideal for obsessive-compulsive racers and fans of statistics
CRASHES Enthu system is fundamentally whacked; plus, *GT4* does just about everything much, much better

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●○○]

Lv42EXP 5SP 1
HP 773/ 773
MP 261/ 261
Linea
Forester
Confirm
Cancel
Details
OK
OK
OK
OK
L1

1 Hit
438 Damage

STELLA DEUS: THE GATE OF ETERNITY

IT'S IN THE STARS

Strategy games have been enjoying a renaissance on the PS2. *Stella Deus* is a conventional but complex game that will reveal its best features only to gamers already acquainted with the genre's inner workings. As ever, you lead a cadre of warriors on a politically and morally motivated quest, cleaving foes in a polite, turn-based form of battle. Why does anyone accept this adrenaline-free abstraction of war? Because the intricacies of the gameplay make it rewarding.

For a game comprised entirely of dozens of menus, *Stella Deus* is surprisingly streamlined. Yes, you have to muck about with tons of statistics, but the developers have organized and explained it all perfectly. The ability system is very well balanced, offering up several different types of skills to tweak. There's also a team attack system, which offers up heightened strategic possibilities. Everything jells together nicely, resulting in a game that is neither punishing in its difficulty nor a total cakewalk.

The visual design packs interesting detail, but the cutout characters and amateur-hour voice acting don't add much punch to the story. It's a more cerebral than visceral tale, though: A pack of morally conflicted teenagers take on a military madman over the fate of the world.

Stella Deus presents an engrossing experience for the hardened campaigner. It's chock-full of quests, items, battles, and moral ambiguity, offering a fine-tuned gameplay experience that anyone who's been longing for the next *Final Fantasy Tactics* should enjoy. « *Christian Nutt*

VERDICT It may not cut a new figure in the strategy genre, but it's exceptionally refined.

Pub. Atlus **Dev.** Pinegrow **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●●○

Stella Deus is the second game from the team behind the PS1 tactical blunder *Hoshigami*. Fortunately, this game is much more balanced and fun. *Stella Deus* and *Hoshigami* mean the same thing, "star of God," in Latin and Japanese, respectively.

DRAGON BALL Z: SAGAS

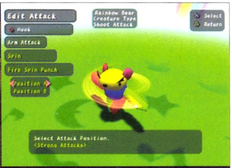
FOUR HOURS GONE FOREVER

Dragon Ball Z: Sagas is proof positive that the ESRB needs to adopt a new rating called CO for "contractual obligation." How else can gamers be protected against obvious rush jobs that are cashing in on, in this case, a fading license? Spare me the sales charts showing how hot *Dragon Ball Z* still is (and perhaps proving that some games are simply immune to reviews). *Sagas* is a terrific idea—a story-based adventure instead of a second-rate fighting game—that was turned into a very short game (about four hours in single-player mode) with uninspired art and level design. Ah, but *DBZ* fans are bound to be sated—a few parts are actually fun, and there is a competent two-player co-op mode. And in the end, that's about all that's important. « *Tom Byron*

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Avalanche **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●◐○○]

Rainbow Bear
Level 8
Carleton-wannabe
★★



GRAFFITI KINGDOM

DO IT YOURSELF

There are three stages of development in drawing *Graffiti Kingdom* characters:

1. **Crap** Like a preschooler with finger paint, you let the 3D pen go where it wants to, squiggling it across the screen just to see what happens. Your characters look like melted crayons. But once you've grasped the basics of crude shape making, your mind quickly turns toward...

2. **Obscenity** While refining your phallus drafting skills, you discover the nuances of assigning functions to your created parts. Calling a part an "arm" makes it swing, bend, and punch like the real thing. But like Will Ferrell movies, game characters with manly endowments are only funny the first time you see them, so you soon get down to the real business of...

3. **Creativity** Given a blank canvas on which to create any kind of character you want, you soon realize how many characters haven't been done. My first real attempt was a giant Marshall guitar amplifier (think *Spinal Tap*) with flaming guitar necks for arms. I also spent a couple of hours recreating Chris Ware's comic-book antihero Jimmy Corrigan (a slouching, balding wuss), but true to form, he couldn't fight worth a damn.

Graffiti Kingdom is a really simple action-adventure, and by adventure, I mean there's a remote possibility you could get lost for a few minutes: Prince Pixel, our young hero, transforms into your homemade creations to battle a menagerie of weirdos. But for me, the simple combat takes a backseat to turning everything I love into a videogame character. « *Robert Ashley*

PROS Watching your character come to life
CONS Shallow combat can get repetitive

Pub. Hot-B **Dev.** Taito/Garakuta-Studio **ESRB** E **MSRP** $29.99

RATING ●●●●○

BETTER THAN DOOM

Obscure's students beat out *Doom*'s marines in one aspect—they've actually figured out how to attach flashlights to their weaponry.

OBSCURE

AND THANK GOODNESS

***Obscure* is a cut-rate** survival-horror game set in a high school. Maneuvering and combat are both very clumsy, and the whole game leaves you wondering about the choices the game designers made. Why can I pick some locks but not others? Why can I break some windows but not others? Why do I have to flip to a separate Status screen to see my health meter? The group of students you control is no brain trust—even Scooby-Doo and the gang could have figured out what nefarious plot was afoot after exploring the first building. But not only can these kids not figure it out on their own, they actually stick around a campus filled with murderous creatures when nothing is keeping them there. Be smarter than they are and stay away. « *Dana Jongewaard*

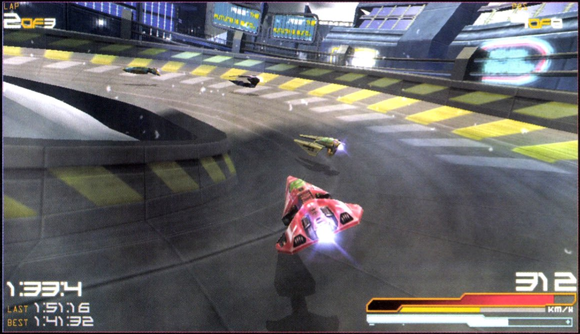
Pub. DreamCatcher **Dev.** Hydravision **ESRB** M **MSRP** $19.99

RATING [●●○○○]

WIPEOUT PURE

ONE HELL OF A ONE-NIGHT STAND

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE GAME OF THE MONTH



The original *Wipeout* rocked the early days of the PS1. Its sleek, stylish look and fiendishly crafted courses made it clear that a new era of gaming had arrived. You're going to hear a lot about how *Wipeout Pure* is doing the same thing for the PSP...but you're not going to hear it from me.

Don't get me wrong, *Pure* is a very good game. It's simply gorgeous, for one thing—its style is similar enough to the original game's to be familiar, yet it's streamlined and updated enough to feel contemporary. The tracks are gleaming visions of a methamphetamine-fueled future, with eye-popping light and weather effects, more eye candy than is possible to take in at the ridiculous speeds the game runs at.

Ah yes, the speed; this is the watershed achievement *Pure* can rightly lay claim to. This game proves beyond the slightest doubt that the PSP can do racing games at home-console speeds and do them very, very well. Don't be fooled by the first league of races—by the time you hit Rapier class, you'll be in more danger from the walls of the track than from other racers. And so in terms of graphics and speed, it's a fantastic showcase for the system.

But damn is it shallow. For one thing, a mere 12 tracks (four of which need to be unlocked via a pretty serious time investment) are on hand for racing, with another four for the "zone" (read: endurance) mode. Advanced levels of difficulty are pretty much solely created by speeding up your vehicle; your opponents will get a little cannier with weapon use, but not much. So you'll play through the eight tracks in three tournaments: the first four, the next four, and then all eight. And once you do that, you do it again, only faster. And then again, faster. And, well, that's pretty much it. You do need to play through single races and time trials to open up the four locked "classic" tracks, but this feels more like an artificial method of increasing play time than an added-value feature.

While I found myself fiercely addicted for the first day or so, once I'd opened up a couple classic tracks and witnessed the ridiculous level of difficulty offered by Rapier class, I felt as though I'd had my fill.

To be fair, the elegantly simple ad hoc multiplayer features add some replay value. And the promise of new tracks, vehicles, and skins available for download in the coming months means that there will be reasons to keep picking up *Pure* in the future. I just don't expect it to be too long before I put it back down again. « *Joe Rybicki*

VERDICT *Pure* is like a highly paid runway model: heartbreakingly gorgeous and dangerously thin.

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Sony Studio Liverpool **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●●○

HACKALICIOUS

While no *Wipeout Pure* downloads were available as of press time, some enterprising PSP fan did come up with an unusual use for *Pure's* download interface: Web browsing. Turn to page 110 for details.

SCORE 0
SPECIAL
0 / 1000 GOAL PTS
250 X 1

SCORE 3650
SPECIAL
50 / 1000 GOAL PTS
298 X 1

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX

HOW DID THEY SQUEEZE ALL THAT GAME INTO SUCH A SMALL SPACE?

Say what you will about the *Jackass*-like antics of *THUG2* (which I did in my review of the PS2 version); there is something damned impressive about playing such a huge game on such a tiny system. *Remix* is, except in the most negligible examples, virtually identical to its PS2 big brother—it's astonishingly easy to forget you're playing the game on a handheld. If you're familiar with the *Tony Hawk* controls, you will pick up *Remix* and instantly know what you're doing. And with the exception of the four new levels, you will have the exact same experience the PS2 version provides.

This means you'll be able to roam around these huge, dynamic levels on your board or on foot. You'll hunt for hidden characters, you'll throw tomatoes at pedestrians, you'll wipe out more than you care to admit, and (if you're anything like me) you'll get tired of the juvenile antics of Bam Margera. But seriously, nearly everything from the PS2 version is here, including the fully fleshed-out classic mode for those of us who just want to skate, man, without all those story mode distractions. You can even slap your own face on your skater via the relatively simple means of transferring a photo to your PSP's memory stick. The only noticeable absence is the create-a-park feature—which, honestly, is no big loss.

I will say that the controls aren't quite perfect: I missed being able to stop while on foot and look around with the right analog stick, for example. I also found myself wishing for the ability to zoom the default camera way out; I don't know if it's the size of the screen or the level design, but I wanted to see more of my skater's surroundings. And while we're talking about the screen, a note to future PSP developers: A day/night cycle is not a good idea for a handheld game. Playing in real-life daylight while the game's showing a nighttime scene is a recipe for a lifetime of migraines.

All that aside, *Remix* is a damn fine port of a very solid game—it's better than anyone had any right to expect on a handheld and a pretty impressive showcase of what the PSP is capable of. « *Joe Rybicki*

900 It's virtually identical to the PS2 version—for better or worse
FACE PLANT The camera's zoomed in too much, and camera control suffers

Pub. Activision **Dev.** Shaba Games/Neversoft **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●●○

WIRELESS COMPETITION

Remix's ad hoc wireless play is solid, with nearly a dozen gameplay modes. But with only four players supported, the levels feel a bit too big. Most of the games I played involved more hunting around for the other players than actual competition.

OUTLAW
HOMING

ROADKILL
POWER
99

TWISTED METAL: HEAD-ON

TEN-YEAR-OLD GAME OF THE FUTURE

Like every red-blooded American man-boy, I can feel the hairs on my arms bristle at the sights and sounds of destruction. So while I tried my best to resist yet another *Twisted Metal* game, the pyrotechnic demolition of *Head-On* wormed its way through my defenses.

I turned up my nose at the very idea of car combat. "A dead, silly genre!" But smashing my way through the crumbling ruins of L.A. highways and Egyptian tombs cured my jaded attitude. *Head-On*'s levels are littered with breakable set pieces, pillars, air ducts, walls, and innocent vehicles. It's a china shop, and you're the bull.

I scoffed at the archaic control scheme, the *Mortal Kombat*–style D-pad combinations used for special moves, and the 10-year-old button layout. "Still no decent analog control!" But as I made my way through the paces, the well-worn interface attached itself to the nerves in my hands. I sank into the game like I'd sink into an old bean bag chair—not sexy, but functional.

Quickly losing ground, I grasped for flaws, for lapses in taste. "Lame characters! Adolescent comic-book rejects!" But who was I kidding? Over the years I'd come to love the little scamps, Axel in his tractor-tire-mounted torture rack, Sweet Tooth's creepy homicidal smile.

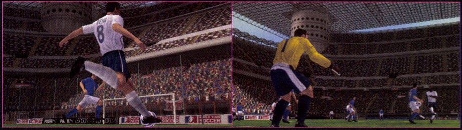
So I gave in and had a blast. The levels, especially the larger, later ones, are some of the best the series has seen. Tearing around Monaco's racetrack, dodging (or blowing up) Indy cars pushes my buttons. The new Paris cleverly mixes big, open ground-floor spaces with rooftops and ramps, creating lots of big-air "Duke boys" action.

Head-On's real hook is the wireless online play. I've spent many mornings at a café down the street, drinking soap-foam cappuccinos and gnawing on gummy bagels, just to catch a Wi-Fi signal. Why? 1) Real players make the game 10 times more fun. 2) Deathmatching across the continent on your PSP makes you feel like you're from the future. 3) People look at you funny when you blurt, "Oh, hell yeah!" « *Robert Ashley*

VERDICT A comfy standby that refuses to go quietly out of fashion. Still great fun, especially online.

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Incog Inc. **ESRB** T **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●●●●○



WORLD TOUR SOCCER

SHORT ON DEPTH, LONG ON FUN

World Tour Soccer has its shortcomings, but in the long run it ends up trumping its big PS2 brother. Maybe it's the competition—there's no *Winning Eleven* for the PSP, and *FIFA* is strong but not epic—but for a kick around, you could do a lot worse.

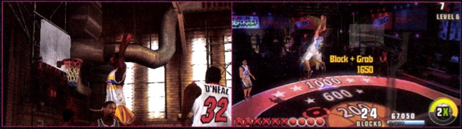
The game moves very quickly, but it's way too easy to back defenders into their own goal if you play on the easier difficulty levels—they won't even try to tackle you. Pump it up to the Master Class level (the most difficult of the four settings), though, and you can forget about easily batting the ball around, as the defense will blanket you like Greece did to its competition in the Euro 2004 tournament. Strangely, though, regardless of your difficulty level, the AI will pass up excellent one-on-goalie opportunities to kick the ball back to a trailing, covered teammate. There's just not a lot of AI urgency to go for the goal, regardless if the team is up 3 to nothing or down by a single score.

While the challenge mode is rewarding—you'll earn points for successful passes, goals, clean sheets, etc., plus you'll unlock loads of footy goodness—it's also quite short. And there are still far too few game modes—the international cups are here, but there are no leagues to speak of. Plus, the game makes the age-old mistake of putting the shoot and slide-tackle commands on the same button—meaning you'll try to kick the ball on net and end up slide-tackling a tackler from behind for a yellow card. So frustrating. « *Todd Zuniga*

PROS Fun and fast, nice replays, tons of teams
CONS Long load times, you have to go to ad hoc mode for wireless play, stupid Dive button

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Sony Studio Liverpool **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●○○]



NBA

WE'RE TALKING 'BOUT PRACTICE

An impressive hoops debut, *NBA* is a Baby Bulls–type surprise. While its name is more Atari 2600 than PSP 2005, it delivers all the pro hoops fixings in style. The game's smart presentation is followed by eye-catching arenas that show off the system's visual prowess, and the brilliant, responsive crowd puts you right there on the parquet.

The game's run-and-gun style is more reminiscent of Bo Kimble's 1990 Loyola Marymount team than the sluggish pro game, but the scores are kept down by a troublesome shot meter that aims to be innovative but shoots an air ball. For anyone who's been one-touch shooting since Ben Franklin discovered electricity, the steep learning curve is a killer. You press the button once to start the shot and again to release it. Two presses: too stupid. With enough practice—using the Skills Challenge, Three-point Contest, and Paint minigames—you'll eventually drain buckets. But I find it maddening that I'm still blowing open layups because of the two-touch system.

Also, if you've got a player in your face and you try to shoot, it will be blocked. If, by miracle, you launch a shot over your smothering defender, it will miss 78 out of 79 times. And many will be air balls. Even the Allen Iversons of the world won't find iron.

Although it's filled with flaws, this is a still a very playable on-the-go b-ball game, even with the occasional bugs and an unthinkably bad free-throw system. « *Todd Zuniga*

PROS Better than the PS2 version, great minigames, slick presentation
CONS Shooting system will give you fits, no commentary, too many blocks, outdated

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** 989 Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

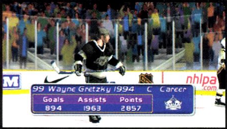
RATING [●●◐○○]

SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

The PlayStation Skills Challenge is one cool minigame. Testing your dribbling, passing, and shooting, it's a great way to spend a commute.

NO GOALS

The NHL continues to be at a labor standstill. Lengthy meetings have gone nowhere. Latest developments have the NHL offering two proposals and the players offering no counterproposal. Expect replacement players if this doesn't get sorted out.

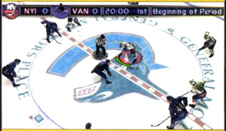


GRETZKY NHL

ICE COOL

While it always puzzled me that Sony's first-party sports games struggle on the company's own system, 989 Sports has hit its stride on the PSP. At worst, all of its portable titles are better than their PS2 counterparts; at best, all of them are fun. No small-screen 989 game exemplifies the fun factor like *Gretzky NHL*. The various PS2 gameplay bumps have been Zamboni'd out of this one, and what's left is a Gaborik-fast hockey game that will even put a smile on the faces of grumpy, lockout-pissed Canadians.

In the spirit of the Sega Genesis hockey revolution, the team opted to keep the game simple instead of overanimating the skaters and bogging down the action. The gameplay can sometimes feel jerky since it's paced to keep those with attention deficit disorder focused, but hockey fans won't mind in the least. The game skews to the international style instead of the NHL left-wing lock, and you can expect lots of breakaways, big saves, and one-timer goals.



The AI isn't brilliant, and the defense will stay put in front of its own net if it can get back in time. Plus, the replays show that many shots never actually touch the stick but are just flung out of the stick's general vicinity. But I don't care—there's enough realism to allow the suspension of a little disbelief. And as rewarding as it is to tickle twine, and as cool as this game is, you won't care, either. « *Todd Zuniga*

PROS Simplified shot aiming is tops, players hockey-stop instead of just stopping
CONS Where's the three-minute period length? No commentary, sometimes you'll skate circles around the puck
VERDICT A great fill-in during the lockout

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Page 44/989 Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●◐○]

M. Faulk
18000
Air Time
2,000

NFL STREET 2: UNLEASHED

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

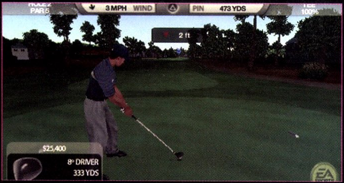
It's funny how *NFL Street 2* is somewhat better suited for the PSP than it is for the PS2. This isn't because of the content or sheer number of modes, even though the PSP version of *Street 2* actually has more street events than the PS2 version. It's that the core gameplay does a great job of harnessing the portable-gaming experience—the game is just so fast paced. In fact, it's so easy to jump into a game, pick plays, and drive down the field within a matter of seconds that the temptation to take out the game to a score a quick touchdown is hard to resist. Still, taken as just a football game, it lacks some of the depth that makes the sport entertaining to begin with. Yes, you can still use all of the basic strategies associated with regular football, but you won't be totally hindered if you don't always adhere to them.

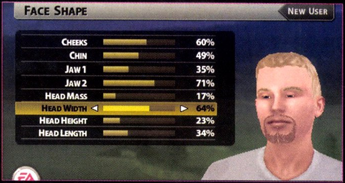
Also, some of *Street 2*'s content just feels like filler, which is to say it isn't all that great. Many of the street events are plain garbage, such as the *DDR* knockoff in which you're supposed to mimic an opposing player's celebration moves. The controls in the street slalom are so shoddy that it's more annoying than entertaining. The other street events—coincidentally, the ones also found in the PS2 version—are entertaining for a few rounds but tend to get old pretty quickly. Thankfully, the NFL gauntlet and NFL challenge modes are there to pick up the slack in terms of offering a little bit of worthwhile variety to the main game. Hopefully, next time around, EA will just focus its efforts on making the arcade-style football even better and not try to artificially add replay value to the game. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Quick gameplay great for the PSP
CONS Too much filler content; gameplay could use a little more tweaking

Pub. EA Sports Big **Dev.** Tiburon **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●○○





CHEEKS	60%
CHIN	49%
JAW 1	35%
JAW 2	71%
HEAD MASS	17%
HEAD WIDTH	64%
HEAD HEIGHT	23%
HEAD LENGTH	34%

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR

NO CADDY NEEDED

In most ways, *Tiger Woods* is an ideal portable game. Golf's hole-by-hole structure makes for easily digestible chunks that are simple to get into and out of (especially with the sensible save-and-quit feature). The almost RPG-like system of leveling up your golfer makes for long-term playability, which is easier to take advantage of on a system you can carry with you at all times. And the sedate pacing means you don't have to devote quite as much attention to the game as you do with, say, *Wipeout Pure*, which means you can play in a jerky subway—or even walking down the street—and not have your environment negatively impact your game.

In fact, I'd say it is the perfect portable game were it not for the ludicrously long load times. We're talking something like three minutes from power-on to game time, with 30-second loads between holes. That's just ridiculous; I mean, the game looks great, and maybe it takes a lot of data to make that happen, but this is crazy.

And that's too bad, because the game looks and feels virtually identical to its PS2 counterparts. Just about everything you'd expect from a *Tiger* game is present and accounted for, from the analog swing to the extremely deep golfer-creation tool to the often laugh-out-loud funny (and incredibly natural-sounding) commentary. Not quite everything is in here, but there's little you'll miss. More important, it feels just as good; yes, it takes a little practice to get your swing just right on the analog nub, but once you learn how to keep it straight, you'll be swinging like a pro.

The game could have used a few more options in the multiplayer arena, though: With only three party-play games and five wireless modes, it feels like a missed opportunity. Where are all the minigames from the recent PS2 *Tiger* titles? And while we're at it, where's the Internet-based infrastructure multiplayer?

Even so, this is an extremely solid—if uninspired—port of the *Tiger* franchise that's every bit as addictive as its PS2 counterparts. « *Joe Rybicki*

VERDICT This would have been the perfect portable game were it not for unbelievably long load times and a lack of imagination in multiplayer.

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●●○

NO CHEATING

You may have heard that it's possible with some games to set up multi-player games with only one copy of the game by loading the game and then swapping the disc between PSPs. Alas, no such luck here.

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